



Update

Greetings!

Welcome to the March 2016 **Advocacy Update**--the latest news about federal and state issues related to the arts. [Read this blog](#) to learn about Vermont issues and specific steps you can take.

Federal update

National Arts Advocacy Day was March 7-8. More than 1,000 arts advocates gathered in Washington, D.C. to confer with elected officials and colleagues.

Alex Aldrich and I met with Vermont's three delegates. We thanked each for their strong support of the arts and applauded their efforts to strengthen funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (the proposed budget includes a \$2M increase over current spending). New data from a recent national survey reveals that:

89% of Americans believe that arts education should be part of a well-rounded K-12 education.

While 25% of Americans believe that federal funding for the arts is about right, **43% believe** funding should be greater.

54% of Americans believe that the current funding level for the arts (\$.45 per capita) should be raised to at least **\$1** per capita.

State update

News on the Arts Council's three-point advocacy agenda:

1. State appropriation (increase to \$680,000 to match the approved federal increase). Staff from the Arts Council testified before the House Appropriations Committee February 16. Circus Smirkus spoke persuasively about economic impacts. Council staff also appeared before the Senate Appropriations Committee on February 26. Final budget considerations are underway now.

2. Bill to establish the Vermont Creative Network. Thanks to the leadership of Rep. Bill Botzow, chair of the House Commerce and Community Development Committee, bill [H. 820](#) has been taken up and is currently attached to the committee's omnibus bill. This is very encouraging news. The Arts Council testified before the committee earlier today and has submitted language which strengthens the intent of the bill.

3. Adoption of the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) by the Agency of Education. **Success!** On February 16, the State Board of Education adopted the National Core Arts Standards. Erika Lowe of the Arts Council co-presented with Chris Case from the Agency of Education. The proposal was supported by strong data based on a survey of Vermont's education field.

Other state advocacy issues

As part of the its policy research agenda, the Arts Council will:

1. explore potential roles for the former Office of Creative Economy.
2. research possible creative sector business incentives.
3. understand the benefits of placing an arts content specialist at the Agency of Education (AOE). With the adoption of the National Core Arts Standards, discussions move immediately to next-steps. Placement of an arts content specialist at the Agency of Education is a high priority.
4. develop arts-appropriate language for inclusion into [Act 186](#), the [Results Based Accountability](#) (RBA) law.

Did you know?

Vermont's House of Representatives is **the same size** as those in Connecticut, New York, and Texas.

Whereas a single representative in Texas serves **180,000** people, in Vermont that number is **4,133**.

A Vermont voice is a powerful voice.

Upcoming advocacy events

- **March 29, 2016** | Vermont Arts Advocacy Day

A number of you have already responded to emails about Arts Advocacy Day. Thanks!

It's true that

- arts advocacy happens **every time** you connect with an elected official--any day, all year long
- March 29 offers that once-per-year opportunity to collectively **raise awareness** for the arts in Vermont

We encourage everyone to get involved! **Why?** Because every voice and every story adds to the broader awareness of the value of arts and culture in all our lives.

1. Today: Share your commitment to the arts. Complete this [short questionnaire](#) (you will be asked to attach a photo of yourself). The photos and words of many Vermonters will appear before all 180 elected officials on Arts Advocacy Day, in the form of Collectors' Cards for the Arts. Here's a sample card:

Today is Vermont Arts Advocacy Day.



I am engaged with the arts. I make my living in Vermont as a freelance artist.

I value the arts because the arts (all forms) make community better, foster understanding and open minds in ways that are unexpected.

I get inspired about the arts in Vermont when I participate in a project that involves community, industry and the arts.

Sarah-Lee Terrat, Waterbury

Collector's Card No. 27. Collect them all!

2. Next: Connect with your elected officials about the importance of the arts. Just prior to March 29, we will send instructions about sending a message to your elected officials in support of the arts in Vermont. Online messages, coupled with the cards distributed on the day, will work together to amplify the arts' voice.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact [Thaddeus Gibson](#), our questionnaire guru. 802.828.3293.

Remember: every voice makes a difference!

All best--



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