



March 16, 2017

**Statement from ASC President Robert Bush regarding
proposed elimination of funding for the NEA**

For more than 50 years, federal funding to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has provided millions of residents in rural and urban communities across the nation opportunities to participate in the arts. The proposed elimination of funding to the NEA by President Trump's administration diminishes residents' access to high-quality arts experiences and threatens the national economy.

According to the 2013 data from the NEA and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the arts contributed \$704 billion to the economy, accounting for 4.2 percent of the nation's annual GDP and employing 4.7 million workers. In fact, funding to the NEA serves as a significant leveraging tool that has helped create an entire industry of locally based small businesses and jobs that cannot be outsourced. Investment in the NEA provides funding that promotes artistic innovation and addresses access social, technological and healthcare issues.

That means in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, military families can explore Charlotte museums for free, Charlotte Symphony musicians can engage with music students at Northwest School of the Arts, public art animates our community and a UNC Charlotte professor can be featured in the New York Times for re-creating a long-lost dance. On a state level, NEA funding to the North Carolina Arts Council enables the council to strengthen arts education throughout the state.

Everyone should have access and opportunities to experience the arts regardless of their economic status, where they live, ethnicity or disability. This budget proposal must not be approved. ASC, the cultural community and its supporters are reaching out to their representatives in Congress now and advocate to keep funding the NEA. It is my hope that fellow residents will do the same.

###

