



Legislation Text

File #: 22082, Version: 1

Fiscal Note

No appropriation is required.

Title

In support of State investment in the arts, art education and creative economy through the Wisconsin Arts Board as an essential State agency.

Body

WHEREAS, robust research, successful models and best practices have proven - for Madison, for Wisconsin and for the entire country - that the arts:

- Are central to the health and vibrancy of all communities by stimulating economic and community development and providing critical social and creative outlets for all;
- Build and sustain prosperity with a cultural infrastructure that plays a crucial role in workforce and business recruitment and retention and provides a significant economic impact;
- Educate our children for the 21st century world and workforce by keeping students in school, increasing high school graduation rates and preparing students with creative, collaborative and imaginative skills; and
- Are enjoyed by all and enrich all residents, since Wisconsin has a long tradition of involvement in the arts at the community level; and

WHEREAS, as the leading creative development agency in State government, the Wisconsin Arts Board uses these core values to:

- Play an increasingly crucial role in economic development and job creation in Wisconsin, a role not duplicated by any other State agency;
- Provide leadership and support to develop the state's creative economy, representing at least 3.6% of total employment in Wisconsin and one of the most dynamic sectors of the world economy with 14% annual growth rate;
- Channel the State's investment to build and maintain its cultural infrastructure by providing both expert consultation and grants to communities large and small;
- Grow Wisconsin's talented and innovative workforce through grant support and technical assistance;
- Support an education system that inspires imagination, creativity and innovation to develop Wisconsin students' skills and capacities;
- Uniquely convene, advise and provide essential grant support to minority arts organizations as both an economic and education strategy for community and workforce development;
- Play a highly visible and central role in Wisconsin's brand with publications like *ArtWorks* and the *State Arts and Crafts Fair Directory*; and
- Administer the Percent for Art program which adds immeasurable value to State-owned buildings while promoting the careers of and employing Wisconsin artists and promoting their careers; and

WHEREAS, Governor Walker's 2011-2013 budget proposal will dissolve the agency and reconstitute it as a small program within the Department of Tourism with its budget attributed to Tourism's marketing budget, radically decreasing the agency's granting capacity by reducing funding by 73%, from over \$2 million to \$1,025,400 (\$500,900 from the State and \$524,500 from federal funds) and a staff reduction from ten to four positions; and

WHEREAS, although the Arts Board has been "attached" to Tourism for years and the partnership between the

two agencies has always been strong, the agencies are not redundant in their mission or work, and both agencies fully understand the fundamental difference between supporting the development of thriving communities and community activities (Arts Board) and marketing them (Tourism); and

WHEREAS, although the current budget realities and the need for shared sacrifice are understood by all, Governor Walker's proposal will severely reduce the agency's ability to serve the people of Wisconsin, with very little impact on the State's budget deficit but with extremely damaging, long-lasting effects on Wisconsin's ability to strengthen the economy, educate our children for the 21st century world and workforce, support quality of life in communities large and small and compete in the global economy; and

WHEREAS, Madison residents have greatly benefitted from Arts Board support, through funding for community-based arts organizations, programs and projects; and

WHEREAS, the Madison Common Council believes that the arts are "part of the solution" for Madison and for the State of Wisconsin, and that a strong, independent and reasonably funded State arts agency is a fundamental resource for statewide development;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Common Council call on the Governor and State Legislature to restore the Arts Board's agency status and funding, with a 10% cut to the agency's biennial budget to address the state's deficit, and restore the Percent for Art program for state buildings with the provision that only Wisconsin artists be involved to contribute to job creation throughout the state.