

Federal Advocacy Report #11

Contact Your Senator Today!

Senate Cuts Arts from Economic Stimulus Plan



On Friday, the U.S. Senate, during their consideration of the economic recovery bill, approved an egregious amendment offered by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) that stated "None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used for any casino or other gambling establishment, aquarium, zoo, golf course, swimming pool, stadium, community park, museum, theater, art center, and highway beautification project."

Unfortunately, the amendment passed by a wide vote margin of 73-24, and surprisingly included support from many high profile Senators including Chuck Schumer of New York, Dianne Feinstein of California, Barbara Mikulski of Maryland, Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, Russ Feingold of Wisconsin, and several other Democratic and Republican Senators **including Bill Nelson and Mel Martinez.**

The House version of the bill included \$50 million for the National Endowment for the Arts, but if the Coburn amendment language is included in the final conference version of this legislation, many arts groups will be prevented from receiving economic recovery funds from any portion of this specific stimulus bill. It is clear that there is still much work to be done in the Senate and in the media about the role that nonprofit arts organizations and artists play in the nation's economy and workforce.

Plan of Action

1. Arts advocates need to quickly contact Senators who voted for the Coburn Amendment and express your extreme disappointment with their vote. We need these Senators to know that their vote would detrimentally impact nonprofit arts organizations and the jobs they support in their state. [We have crafted a customized message for you to send to your Senators](#) based on their vote on the Coburn Amendment. The correct letter, customized to each of your Senators will appear when you enter your zip code. If your Senator voted for this funding prohibition, you can send them a message expressing your disappointment and ask them to work to delete this language in the final conference bill with the House. If your Senator voted against the Coburn Amendment, you can thank them for their support of the arts.

2. We need as many news outlets as possible this week to publish stories about the economic impact of the nonprofit arts industry and how the recession is negatively affecting arts groups across the country. Please [click here](#) to customize an opinion editorial to your local media. We have provided you with easy-to-use talking points.

3. This week, Americans for the Arts will be sending another action alert that targets the White House and the soon-to-be-named Senators and Representatives who will serve as conferees to the final economic recovery bill. Please be prepared to take action on this alert as well.

4. Americans for the Arts itself is submitting op-eds to several national newspapers and online blogs. We are enlisting high profile leaders to co-sign these letters as well.

5. Americans for the Arts is purchasing [full-page ads](#) titled "The Arts = Jobs" in Washington's top political newspapers in Roll Call, Politico and The Hill on Monday and Tuesday. We encourage you to post the ad on your social network sites.

As always, thank you for your advocacy efforts. Your voice *does* make a difference!

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