

# **NDEO Advocacy Forum Handbook**

**By**

**©Richard Bell**

**September 27, 2009**

Welcome to NDEO's Advocacy Forum. Thank you for joining with NDEO members in educating our local, state, and national elected officials about the power of dance arts education programs and educators.

Understanding politics and paying attention to what our elected officials are doing is not a luxury. The policy and budget decisions that these officials make end up circumscribing the universe of possibilities open to us as dance educators, and can easily prevent children from ever coming into contact with dance during their education. In the end, our success comes down to the willingness of each and every one of us to carve out space in our always-overcrowded agendas, and make sure that our friends, our communities, and our elected officials understand, and never forget, why every child should be dancing

This guide will help you become a more effective educator for dance education and NDEO. Our elected officials at every level of government wrestle with similar challenges: they are almost always understaffed in relation to the myriad of issues they face every day. So no matter who you're talking to, your mindset about how to prepare yourself and present your case will be similar.

Note: If you are not a member of NDEO, you will be able to read comments on the Advocacy Forum, but you will not be able to post your own comments. When you join NDEO, you will get [many benefits](#), including full-posting rights to the Advocacy Forum, as well as all of the other NDEO forums. And you'll become a member of America's most effective organization for research and advocacy for dance education. [Join today!](#)

## **Using the Advocacy Forum**

If you're reading this document, then you've already in the Advocacy Forum. This forum is dedicated to building a powerful and informed community of advocates for dance education. Using this forum, NDEO members can participate as never before in educating our elected officials at every level. For small nonprofits like NDEO, there will never be enough paid staff to do everything that needs to be done. But by using the Advocacy Forum, NDEO members can amplify the work of the core staff many times over. And because the forum is a "message in—message out" environment, NDEO's staff have the opportunity to learn from members.

If you have never used any kind of forum software, don't worry. You may make some mistakes, but you can't "break" anything. If you click on "Forums," you will go to the main forums page, which contains [a Tutorial](#) and a [Forum Usage and Policy Q&A](#). This forum is not moderated, which means that when you write up a comment and hit "post," your comment appears immediately on the Advocacy Forum. However, there are forum administrators who are participating in the forum and keeping an eye on things. We expect everyone who posts in the Advocacy Forum will be respectful of the posts of others. On the Internet at large, it is not uncommon for people on un-moderated forums to become seriously agitated, ending up in escalating exchanges called "flame wars." If you feel yourself becoming overly engaged in a discussion, move your fingers away from the keyboard, and take a nice, deep calming breath. Otherwise, enjoy this wonderful new way for us to work together!

### **Building Trust Relationships**

The core concept in educating your elected officials at every level is building relationships. Elected officials and staff are very time-stressed people, and non-federal elected officials may have little or no staff support. For the rest of this paper, we will refer to these people collectively as elected officials. Even in the U.S. House of Representatives, a typical House member has only 6 or 8 legislative staffers who are responsible for advice on the entire spectrum of domestic and international issues. Elected officials and their staff appreciate help from people like you who can make their lives easier by providing them with well-defined, trustworthy arguments and information. Campaign cash is important, but trust is an invaluable currency for people who are operating under the pressures and deadlines of office. And repeated follow-ups on initial contacts are an essential part of the process of building up this trust relationship.

In this memo, you will learn how to build the relationships you need to make sure that your concerns, and the concerns of NDEO, are heard. You will find out how to:

- Find contact information online for your elected officials and their staff at the local, state, and national level.
- craft a short, simple effective message
- deliver your message to your elected officials and staff face-to-face, by phone, by email, and by mail.

### **Finding Your Elected Officials, Personal Staff, and Committee Staff**

Let's talk first about how you find out what elected officials are representing you, the names of staff handling education issues, and how to contact them

America's arts organizations usually work in coalitions when it comes to legislation. One of the groups we work most closely with is Americans for the Arts (AftA), the country's largest nonprofit promoting the arts, with more than 5,000 organizational and individual members. NDEO is a general partner of Americans for the Arts (AftA), and we encourage NDEO members to show their support of AftA by participating in AftA's action alert program.

AftA has put together a wonderful online tool, the *Arts Action Center*, which makes it much easier than it used to be to find contact information for your elected officials and some staff, all the way down to the local level in many states. The Arts Action Center also has a number of other very useful resources that will make you a more effective advocate for NDEO and dance education.

Here's how you can put the Arts Action Center to work for NDEO:

1. Use your zip code to find names and contact information for your federal, state, and local elected officials [at this link](#). Because many legislative districts either split zip codes, or contain more than one zip code, you may be asked for your nine-digit zip code. Never fear: go ahead and type in your 5-digit zip code. If your zip code is split, a handy little box will pop up at the bottom of the page where you can enter your mailing address, and up pops your nine-digit zip code. The next page shows the entire "E-Advocacy Center," where you can use your zip code to bring up contact information on all your elected officials, your local media, and local elections.

09/27/2009

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[NEWS](#) | [INFORMATION & SERVICES](#) | [ADVOCACY](#) | [GET INVOLVED](#) | [NETWORKS](#) | [EVENTS](#)



**POLICY AND ADVOCACY**

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PARTNERSHIPS

VISIBILITY

# TWO MINUTES.

## THAT'S ALL IT TAKES TO TELL CONGRESS YOU SUPPORT THE ARTS AND ARTS EDUCATION.



ARTS ACTION CENTER

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[Home](#) • [Elected Officials](#) • [Issues](#) • [Election](#) • [Media](#)

E-Advocacy Center

ACTION ALERT! XML

**Federal: Urge Your Members of Congress to Support Cultural Tourism**

Write to your Members Today! [Click Here.](#)

**Federal: Ask the Senate to Support Arts Education and National Service**

Write Your Senators in Support of this Funding Today! [Click Here.](#)

**Federal: Urge Your Senators to Support the NEA**

Write to your Senators Today! [Click Here.](#)



### CONGRESS & PRESIDENT

Enter your ZIP Code and click "Go" or [click here](#) for other searches. GO



### STATE OFFICIALS

Find state representatives by selecting your state. AK  GO



### LOCAL OFFICIALS

Find local officials. Enter your ZIP Code or [search by state.](#) GO



### ISSUES & LEGISLATION

Important issues, recent votes, current legislation, and more. [Click here.](#) GO



### ELECTION & CANDIDATES

For election results, enter your ZIP Code or [search by state.](#) GO



### GUIDE TO THE MEDIA

Enter your ZIP Code and click "Go" or [click here](#) for other searches. GO

CONGRESS TODAY - September 27, 2009

**Today's House Schedule** ([details](#))

**Today's Senate Schedule** ([details](#))

**Committee Hearings Search** ([details](#))

Search the House and Senate current committee schedules, projected schedule posted.

**Action E-List Get**

an alert when your involvement can make a critical difference.

**Tell-A-Friend**

Send a note to a friend to let them know about the important arts issues on our site.

**Web Sticker:**


Put our "Write to Congress" web sticker on YOUR web site!

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Printer-Friendly Version

E-mail this to a Friend

Let's use a zip code for Alexandria VA to see what kinds of information you get. First, we'll enter the zip code 22305 in the "Congress and President" box, which gives us the following page, with the names of your federal and state elected officials. Notice that the House of Delegates requires the 9-digit zip code, and that the tool for entering your address and retrieving your 9-digit zip code is sitting right there.



**ARTS ADVOCACY DAY**  
THE 2009 NATIONAL ARTS SUMMIT  
Washington, DC  
March 30 - March 31 2009

**AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ACTION FUND** **JOIN NOW**

View the "Ten Simple Ways"

**ART ASK FOR MORE.**

**ARTS ACTION ALERT**

**Voice Your Support for the Arts**

Enter ZIP Code  **GO**

Write to your Senators Today! [Click Here.](#)

**Write Your Elected Officials**

Write to your [Federal](#) or [State](#) elected officials with one click, or just go to the individual pages linked below.

**ZIP Code 22305 splits legislative districts (represented by \*). Please enter your full 9-digit ZIP code (ZIP+4) below.**

<b>President &amp; Congress</b> <b>President</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barack Obama (D)</li> </ul> <b>Senators</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jim Webb (D)</li> <li>Mark Warner (D)</li> </ul> <b>Representatives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>James Moran (D-8)</li> </ul>	<b>Governor &amp; State Legislators</b> <b>Governor</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timothy Kaine (D)</li> </ul> <b>Senate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patricia Ticer (D-30)</li> </ul> <b>House of Delegates*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>David Englin (D-45)</li> <li>Adam Ebbin (D-49)</li> </ul>
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**Eliminate split districts by entering your 9-digit ZIP+4**

22305  **GO**

**If you don't know your ZIP+4, enter your address below and click "GO".**

**Address:**

**City:**

**State:**  **ZIP Code:**  **GO**

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If you pick your U.S. Representative, James Moran, you get the following screen:

**Arts Action Center**

- E-Advocacy Center
- Legislative Update
- Legislative Priorities
- Legislative News
- Advocacy Events
- Arts Policy
- Arts Research
- Advocacy Captains
- State Action Network
- Advocacy Awards
- Citizens Taking Action
- Public Awareness Campaign
- Funding Resources
- Partners
- Staff

**ARTS ADVOCACY DAY**  
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**AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ACTION FUND** **JOIN NOW**

**ARTS ACTION CENTER**

Home • Elected Officials • Issues • Media


Congressional Directory • President • Agencies

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**Rep. James Moran (D-VA 8th District)**

10th term Democrat from Virginia 8th District.

**Bio** | Contact | Committee | Staff | Bills | PAC



**Residence:** Alexandria

**Marital Status:** Married (LuAnn Bennett)

**Prev. Occupation:** Stockbroker

**Prev. Political Exp.:** Alexandria City Council, 1979-82; Mayor of Alexandria, 1985-90

**Education:** BA Holy Cross College, 1967; MPA University of Pittsburgh, 1970

**Birthdate:** 05/16/1945

**Birthplace:** Buffalo, NY

**Religion:** Catholic

**Percentage in Last Election:** 68%

**Major Opponent:** Mark Ellmore

[Visit Official Website](#)

[Tell A Friend](#)

There are two types of staff you will want to talk with: personal staff, who work directly for your elected official, and committee staff. To find the personal staff person who handles education issues, call your elected official's office and ask for the person who handles education. In most cases, the person who answers will be able to help you; if not, ask for the legislative director. In almost every office, one staffer is in charge of all the legislative aides; if none of those aides is covering education, then the legislative director will be the person to speak with.

If you are calling the personal office of an official who leads a committee or subcommittee, also ask if there is a staff person on the committee or subcommittee whom the Rep works with. In general, higher ranking committee members have a say in committee staff hiring, and it's very common for someone who was working on an elected official's personal staff to move onto committee staff, but still work closely with that official

Click on the Staff tab, and you get a list of Moran's staff with their issue assignments:

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**PARTNERSHIPS**  
**VISIBILITY**

**Arts Action Center**  
 E-Advocacy Center  
 Legislative Update  
 Legislative Priorities  
 Legislative News  
 Advocacy Events  
 Arts Policy  
 Arts Research  
 Advocacy Captains  
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**Rep. James Moran (D-VA 8th District)**  
 10th term Democrat from Virginia 8th District.

Bio Contact Committee **Staff** Bills PAC

**Current Elected Office Staff Members:**

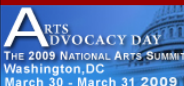
- > Chief of Staff: Frank Shafroth
- > Scheduler: Gayle Reuter
- > Comm. Dir.: Austin Durrer
- > Child/Family Issues LA: Marcia Knutson
- > Education LA: Marcia Knutson
- > Tax LA: Frank Shafroth
- > Budget LA: Frank Shafroth
- > Arts/Humanities LA: Tim Aiken

**ARTS ADVOCACY DAY**  
 THE 2009 NATIONAL ARTS SUMMIT  
 Washington, DC


Suppose you want to find your local officials, and you live in Alexandria, VA at zip code 22305. You enter your zip code into the box next to Local Officials, and the following screen comes up with the names of your mayor, city council, and others.

**Arts Action Center**

- E-Advocacy Center
- Legislative Update
- Legislative Priorities
- Legislative News
- Advocacy Events
- Arts Policy
- Arts Research
- Advocacy Captains
- Advocacy Awards
- Citizens Taking Action
- Public Awareness Campaign
- Funding Resources
- Partners
- Staff



THE 2009 NATIONAL ARTS SUMMIT  
Washington, DC  
March 30 - March 31 2009



**JOIN  
NOW**

**ARTS ACTION CENTER**

[Home](#) • [Elected Officials](#) • [Issues](#) • [Election](#) • [Media](#)

[Congressional Directory](#) • [President](#) • [Agencies](#) • [Supreme Court](#)

**Local Officials**

Local Gov't Search » [VA](#) » Alexandria

**Alexandria**

**Address:**  
City of Alexandria  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-3211

**Phone:** (703) 838-4000  
**Fax:** (703) 838-6433  
**Web:** [alexandriava.gov](http://alexandriava.gov)

**Office & Contact Information**

**Mayor**

<p><b>Name:</b> Euille, William D.</p>	<p><b>Contact Information:</b> Phone: (703) 838-4500 Fax: (703) 838-6433</p>
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**Council Member**

<p><b>Name:</b> Pepper, Redella S. "Dei" Vice Mayor Gaines, Ludwig P.</p>	<p><b>Contact Information:</b> Phone: (703) 838-4500 Fax: (703) 838-6433 Phone: (703) 838-4500</p>
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## Dealing with Legislative Committees

In moving through the legislative process, a bill almost always passes through one or more committees: for example, jurisdiction over the health care reform legislation which Congress is now debating is shared between 5 committees, 3 in the House and 2 in the Senate. Each step in this legislative process offers opportunities for reaching out to the members who sit on whatever subcommittee or committee is handling a bill at that stage.

In most cases, there will be at least one committee with sole or primary jurisdiction over educational policy and programs. In the House of Representatives, that committee is the [Committee on Education and Labor](#), which in turn has 5 subcommittees, of which the two most relevant to NDEO are the [Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness Subcommittee](#) and the [Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee](#). In the U.S. Senate, the dominant education committee is the [Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions](#), whose jurisdiction includes Head Start, the No Child Left Behind Act, Higher Education, the Arts and Humanities, Student Financial Assistance, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Job and Vocational Training and the Workforce Investment Act. In both the [House](#) and the [Senate](#), there are separate appropriations committees which actually approve the funding for executive branch agencies and programs.

Most state legislative websites have links that will give you a list of the committees in your state legislature. If it's not clear from the legislative website which committee(s) have jurisdiction over educational matters, pick the committee that appears to be most likely, call the committee, and find out who's handling education.

### **Crafting Your Message—Keep It Short, Keep It Simple**

Your elected officials are busy. Even if you have an appointment you made a month ago, the elected official or staffer could be yanked away by some crisis if the legislature is in session after you've only had a minute to talk.

Your elected officials have little time to read: if you get into the back offices of any elected official, you'll see unending mountains of papers, reports, and books, piled up so high they would crush you if they fell.

No matter what mode of communication you're using—face-to-face, phone, or email—you want to deliver your core message briefly and concisely--no longer than *one minute*. You can leave behind as much supporting material as you want. But make sure that if you only get one minute of someone's attention, that person comes away with the core message, even if he or she never looks at any of the other leave-behind materials.

Here is a basic structure for messages you can adapt as needed, whether you're meeting in person with an elected official or staffer, talking on the phone, or sending an email or letter:

1. Thank the person for meeting with you.
2. Deliver the *one minute* message. A few short paragraphs are fine. Here's an example from a current issue alert from Americans for the Arts:

“As your constituent, I urge you to support funding for the Corporation for National and Community Service and Arts in Education Programs (AIE) at the US Department of Education.

“The House has proposed a \$2 million boost over last year's funding level to total \$40 million for AIE. This still falls short of the \$53 million requested by advocates on Arts Advocacy Day this year. These programs fund grants for arts education professional development and model dissemination programs, as well as arts education programs at the Kennedy Center and VSA arts.

“In addition, the House has proposed \$1.059 billion in FY10 for CNCS. While this figure is a \$169 million increase set to implement the new Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, the allocation falls \$90 million below President Obama's request.

“I believe these programs are a wise investment in the creativity and social innovation of our nation. Please fully fund these important programs. Thank you for your support.”

If you’re meeting in person, you don’t have to memorize your message. Write out your message on a card—you don’t have to read it, but having it handy can reduce your anxiety about leaving anything out. And you can put the arguments into your own words. For example, you could start by saying “As one of your constituents, and as a professional dance educator....”

3. Repeat the MESSAGE in the first sentence. (There’s a reason why advertisers show you the same commercial over and over again.)
4. Start a dialogue by asking for his/her ideas about the subject of your message. LISTEN! This is your chance to get some perspective, to learn what else you could do to be helpful, to discover what kind of wrong or misleading information the person may believe, and to find out what messages other organizations are delivering on your issues.
5. Before you end your conversation, get direct contact information for any staffer you speak with, such as a direct phone line or email address.
6. Thank the person again for his/her time.
7. FOLLOW UP—Staying in touch is the only way to build your relationships with your elected officials and their staff. . Don’t be shy. There are usually dozens of issues at play at any given time, so you need to keep reminding them about the importance of dance education. If you are lucky, you will come across an elected official or a staffer who shares your understanding of the importance of dance education. But even staff who are not personally invested are still required, in their role as public servants (you are, after all, paying their salaries), to listen politely. Education is a process, and officials and staff are no different from the students you work to engage with in the classroom and the studio.

Here are some follow-up suggestions:

- Within a day of your first meeting or phone conversation, send an email or a written note to the person you met with thanking him/her for the time.
- When you get a message from NDEO or another dance education organization asking you to contact one or more of your elected officials, follow the instructions about whom to contact—but also reach out to any staffers with whom you have already communicated.
- On your own, keep an eye out for new studies or reports that support your message, and let your staff contacts know about them: an email with a link to a study would be ideal. (Be judicious: staff email boxes are very crowded, so you only want to send the compelling stuff.)

- Don't miss the chance to praise your elected officials when they do the right thing. Send an email to the official, and a separate email to your staff contacts, expressing your appreciation for what that official did, and whatever the staffer may have done along the way. And take advantage of the many ways you can spread the good word online, so that other people can see that taking action for dance education can produce real results: post a note on your Facebook page, send a tweet out, email people on your personal list—or send in a good old letter-to-the-editor—using the same “keep it short/keep it simple” format that you use in face-to-face meetings (see above).

### **Delivering Your Message to Your Elected Officials and Staff**

People have many reasons for seeking office. But once they're elected, getting re-elected tends to be a pretty high priority. So when it comes to taking the time to talk with people, your elected officials are most likely to be responsive to messages from voters whom they officially represent.

But you may also be asked to contact other elected officials who chair the committees or subcommittees that have jurisdiction over issues involving dance education. By virtue of their committee roles, these elected officials are responsible for listening to and representing more citizens than just those who can vote for them. In the U.S. Congress, for example, the chairs of committees in the House and Senate that handle dance education issues are, in effect, national figures, so it makes sense to contact them, even if you don't live in their district or state.

Here are some ways to educate your elected officials and their staffs, in decreasing order of effectiveness:

- Visit with your elected official: You can meet in a local office, a district office, the state capitol, or in Washington, DC. At the federal level, members return to their districts or states regularly, so if you want a face-to-face meeting with your own representative or Senators, it is logistically easier (and cheaper for you) to meet on your home ground. Your best bet for meeting with any elected official is to schedule your meeting *as far in advance* as possible. Dropping in to an office rarely produces a visit with the elected official; at best you will end up with a staffer, and sometimes a staffer who is not familiar with your issues. If you are meeting while a legislative body is in session, there's always a chance that your elected official will not be available; usually offices respond by getting you some time with a relevant staffer.
- Visit with a staff member: Meet directly with a staffer who's responsible for education. Meetings with staff are more likely to require some travel, either to a state capitol or to Washington. Again, schedule this visit. Staffs have somewhat more stable schedules than their bosses.

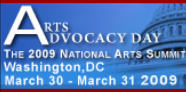

- **Phone relevant staff:** A phone call is not quite as good as a visit, but you can accomplish a great deal on the phone. Not all staff are easy to reach on the phone. You can call anytime, but you're most likely to get through when the legislature is not in session. If you reach the relevant staffer and if she says she's too busy, tell her how much time you need, and schedule a follow-up phone call. Most state legislatures have calendars on their web sites that show when they're in session. The House and Senate web sites have calendars you can check to see when they're not in session.
- **Emailing your elected official:** Email wore out its welcome some time ago in most legislative offices. Organizations got too good at generating mass emails, and were swamping office in-boxes. At the Congressional level, most personal offices now accept emails only from constituents. If you try to use the email form on many personal office websites, you will usually be stopped if you cannot supply the address of someone who can vote for that elected official. If you run into this kind of roadblock trying to email the head of a relevant committee or subcommittee, look on the committee website for the email address for the committee or subcommittee if the elected official is someone who does not directly represent you. To contact these chairs and ranking minority members, go to the committee or subcommittee websites, and follow the instructions there for sending messages to the committee. There are links to committee sites on the [House](#) and [Senate](#) websites.
- **Phone the office switchboard:** In some cases, you may participate in a phone-in where the message is very simple: support (or oppose) a bill. The front desk staff keep a running log of these calls, but there is very little opportunity here to convey much more than a Yes or a No. You can reach any U.S. House or Senate member at 202-224-3121.
- **Send letters:** Writing to your elected officials can still be a useful, if slow, way to communicate. In most offices, staff will prepare reports that at least note how many letters have come in, and may even quote from especially persuasive letters. You can also use the mail to send in reports or news stories that you think support your position. In Washington, D.C., letters to Congress are unlikely to arrive in a timely way because the security procedures for handling mail can cause significant delays. If you want to send a letter to a member of Congress, send it to the district or state office.

### **Participating in AftA's Legislative Alerts**

NDEO is a general partner of Americans for the Arts. We encourage you to sign up for and participate in AftA's legislative alert program. You can find news about all the legislation AftA is following on the [legislative alert page](#).

**Arts Action Center**

- E-Advocacy Center
- Legislative Update
- Legislative Priorities
- Legislative News
- Advocacy Events
- Arts Policy
- Arts Research
- Advocacy Captains
- State Action Network
- Advocacy Awards
- Citizens Taking Action
- Public Awareness Campaign
- Funding Resources
- Partners
- Staff

**ARTS ACTION CENTER**

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[Legislative Alerts and Updates](#) • [Current Legislation](#) • [Key Votes](#) • [Capitol Hill Basics](#)

**Legislative Alerts and Updates**

Congress:

- [Federal: Urge Your Members of Congress to Support Cultural Tourism](#)
- [Federal: Urge Members of Congress to Support Healthcare Reform](#)
- [Federal: Ask the Senate to Support Arts Education and National Service](#)
- [Federal: Urge Your Senators to Support the NEA](#)
- [Federal: Urge Members of Congress to Support the NEA](#)
- [Federal: Tell Congress to Ease Restrictions on Foreign Artists and Cultural Exchanges](#)
- [Federal: Tell Congress to Support Arts in Education](#)
- [Federal: Urge Your Representatives to Co-Sponsor the House Artist Deduction Bill](#)
- [Federal: Urge Your Senators to Co-Sponsor the Senate Artist Deduction Bill](#)

State Legislative:

- Arizona - [URGENT - Act Now: All Budget Proposals Are Out](#)
- California - [Add the Arts to the View of State Legislators](#)
- New Jersey - [NJ Arts Need YOUR Support](#)
- Nevada - [State Arts Funding Reverts to Levels From Early 1990s](#)
- Nevada - [Keep the Arts Strong in Nevada](#)
- Oregon - [Help Preserve Oregon Arts, Culture, and Humanities Funding](#)
- Texas - [FINE ARTS COULD BE OUT AS HS GRADUATION REQUIREMENT](#)

Statewide:

For each alert, you can choose to compose and send an email message to your elected officials about that issue. There is a separate page with [an issue brief](#) for each legislative action if you want more background information. Here's the beginning of the issue brief on "[Arts Education Funding and Research through the U.S. Department of Education](#)," which includes a list of needed actions and detailed talking points.

- Legislative Priorities
- Legislative News
- Advocacy Events
- Arts Policy
- Arts Research
- Advocacy Captains
- State Action Network
- Advocacy Awards
- Arts Action Fund
- PSA Campaigns
- Funding Resources
- Partners
- Staff

**Issue Brief: Arts Education Funding and Research Through the U.S. Department of Education**

Improving Access to Arts Education for All Students ([PDF](#))

**ACTION NEEDED**

We urge Congress to:

- Appropriate \$53 million for the Arts in Education programs in the FY 2010 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill.
- Require the U.S. Department of Education to produce timely and comprehensive reports on the status of all arts education disciplines in America's public schools, when implementing future *Fast Response Statistical Surveys* and *National Assessment of Educational Progress* assessments.

**Table: Arts in Education Annual Appropriations, FY2002 to Present** (in millions of dollars)

Fiscal Year	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09
Appropriation	30.0	33.8	35.1	35.6	35.3	35.3	35.3	38.1*

Note: Figures above are not adjusted for inflation. Source: U.S. Department of Education  
 \*Pending Congressional approval of Omnibus appropriations bill.

**TALKING POINTS**

- *The U.S. Department of Education must include the arts in all research and data collection regarding the "core academic subjects."* President Obama's arts platform statement included support for arts education, stating that: "In addition to giving our children the science and math skills they need to compete in the new global context, we should also encourage the ability to think creatively that comes from a meaningful arts education." The platform

## Using AftA's Congressional Arts Handbook.

[The AftA's Congressional Arts Handbook](#) has sections on AftA's entire legislative agenda. For each section, there are talking points and background materials which you will find helpful in answering questions you may get from legislative staff.

## Go As Deep As You Want To on NDEO's Website

The NDEO website has great resources about the power of dance education that you may want to be able to discuss if they come up. No one expects you to know all of these issues in depth, but having some key talking points at your finger tips shows that you're serious. For example, if a staff person says to you--"We're trying to raise math test scores here—how is dance going to help?"—you can come back with a powerful statistic:

"Students who study dance score an average 36 and 15 points higher on verbal and math SATs. (College Entrance Examination Board, Student Descriptive Questionnaire)"

Check out NDEO's page "[About Dance Education in the United States](#)" for more great statistics and studies.

And if you want to know more about the history of federal support for dance, you can find a concise overview with the names of all the programs and relevant pieces of legislation in this NDEO paper, "[The National Agenda for Dance Arts Education](#)."

## Other Handy Phone Numbers and Web Sites

The resources below supplement those at NDEO and AftA's Arts Action Center.

### The House of Representatives and the Senate

1. U.S. Capitol Switchboard: You can reach any House or Senate office on the Hill by dialing the Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121 and asking for the name of your representative or senator.
2. [Official U.S. House of Representatives website](#). Has links to all Representatives, committees, and rules of operation.
3. [Official U.S. Senate website](#). Has links to all Senators, committees, and rules of operation.
4. House and Senate Leadership

The Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, and the Majority Leader of the Senate, Harry Reid, coordinate and control the movement of legislation through the House and Senate. You can always include these elected officials in your message outreach if you have time after contacting your own elected officials. Because of the rules that govern the House, Pelosi has significantly more control over the House's agenda than Reid has over the Senate's. It is much easier to amend bills in the Senate than in the House, but a minority of 40 Senators can prevent legislation from being brought to a vote through the use of the filibuster process.

Nancy Pelosi  
 Speaker of the House  
 Office of the Speaker  
 H-232, US Capitol  
 Washington, DC 20515  
 (202) 225-0100  
[www.speaker.gov](http://www.speaker.gov)

Harry Reid  
 Majority Leader of the Senate  
 522 Hart Senate Office Bldg  
 Washington, DC 20510  
 Phone: 202-224-3542  
 Toll Free for Nevadans:  
 1-866-SEN-REID (736-7343)  
<http://democrats.senate.gov/>

5. [Thomas](#), the Library of Congress website that tracks all legislation before the current Congress, plus searchable online archives of Congress going back to the 101<sup>st</sup> Congress (1989-1990).

#### State Legislative Websites

The Law Librarians' Society of Washington DC (LLSDC) maintains a very thorough contact list for state legislatures: "[State Legislatures, State Laws, and State Regulations: Website Links and Telephone Numbers.](#)" This contact list is part of the LLSDC's "[Legislative Source Book](#)," an online research book focusing on federal legislation. If you need to do detailed federal legislative research, these librarians have assembled a great set of links.

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In a time of tight budgets, those of us who know the most about the power of dance education to transform children's lives bear a deep responsibility for informing our elected officials about the critical importance of strengthening dance education. Please visit the Advocacy Forum often so that we can be inspired by each other's successes, and learn from each other's setbacks. Thanks!