YOU Can Help Reverse Devastating Cut to Arts and Culture

(plus: Local legislators’ responses, and update as of 7/30/16)

You may have seen the recent news that level funding to the arts and cultural sector through the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s FY17 budget was vetoed last week, and was replaced with a cut of over 50%, from $14.1 million to $6.5 million. This devastating veto reduces our funding to levels not seen since 1994!

But there is still hope. The House and Senate have the opportunity to override the veto and restore level funding, bringing the state’s investment in arts and culture back to $14 million for FY17. If the House and Senate agree to override this veto, the Local Cultural Council program – and our many programs that support the Massachusetts cultural infrastructure – will avoid significant cuts.

You can support legislative efforts to make that happen. It’s important to let your legislators know that arts are essential to your community, and that cutting this funding will have deleterious effects statewide, for families, students and adults alike.

Here are the email addresses for our State Representative and State Senator:

Senator Donald F. Humason, Jr. (Donald.Humason@masenate.gov)

Representative Nicholas A. Boldyga (nicholas.boldyga@mahouse.gov)

(Please copy and paste these into your mail server.)

Contact your State Representative this week. Let them know that:

- You support them in their promise to attempt an override of the veto to the MCC’s budget.
- It is urgent to pass an override as soon as possible so that FY17 grants to your community are not delayed.

The House of Representatives will vote whether to override the veto this month, and if they do, the Senate will vote next.

On behalf of all those in our community who enjoy -- and benefit from -- the efforts of the Agawam Cultural Council, thank you for your advocacy efforts!

Respectfully,

Bob Kadis – former chair, Agawam Cultural Council

PLEASE READ ON -- statements from Senator Humason and Representative Boldyga below …
Hi Bob.  

As you know I supported increasing arts and cultural funding in the Senate budget.  

I'm disappointed that the Governor had to reduce the funding but he did so based on decreasing state revenues caused by our shaky economy and poor returns from the stock market.  

I believe budgets are fundamentally about priorities and I would like to see money restored to arts and cultural programs in Massachusetts if the revenues outpace the poor projections.  

However, if the House votes to override the veto and it makes it to the Senate I will gladly vote to override it. All veto overrides must by law begin in the House.  

Thank you.  

Don Humason

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Hi Bob,  

We are indeed signed on to the letter of support to override this veto. We supported the MCC amendments in the budget and will gladly vote to restore the funding if it is brought to a vote today.  

Most Sincerely,

Philip Kleinbohl  
Legislative Director, Office of Rep. Nicholas Boldyga  
Proudly Serving Agawam, Granville & Southwick

Committees:  
• Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets  
• Ways and Means
State Representative Boldyga’s local District Office is located at:

Cooper's Commons
159 Main St. - Suite M
Agawam, MA 01001

Telephone: (413) 455-3007
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At the State House:
West Wing, Room 167

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**Funding sought for Cultural Council**

*(posted by, Sentinel & Enterprise)*

**Updated:** 07/30/2016 06:32:17 AM EDT

**BOSTON --** More than half the state Legislature has signed onto a letter supporting an override of Gov. Charlie Baker's funding veto for the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Writing that he was "reducing this item to the amount projected to be necessary," Baker slashed $7.7 million from council funding, bringing it to $6.5 million.

A total of 106 representatives and 21 senators signed the letter, which was circulated by leaders of the Cultural Caucus and Committee on Tourism.

Overrides require a two-thirds vote from each branch and must originate in the House.

-- STATE HOUSE NEWS SERVICE