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California State Senate

ANTHONY J. PORTANTINO
SENATOR
TWENTY-FIFTH SENATE DISTRICT



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April 25, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Room 8630
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jim Nielsen
Vice Chair, Senate Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Room 7110
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Sydney Kamlager
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee # 4
Legislative Office Building, Room 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Room 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Vince Fong
Vice Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Room 4630
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Wendy Carrillo
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee # 4
1021 O Street, Suite 5730
Sacramento, CA 94249

Subject: Investment in the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund of \$300 million over 3 years

As the Legislature deliberates their budget priorities, I request consideration of an investment of \$300 million over 3 years in California's Small Nonprofit Performing Arts Organizations as well as the local creative communities in California.

Small nonprofit performing arts organizations (SNPAOs) play a major role in the arts and culture ecosystem in California, which represents 7.4% of the state's economy. When properly funded, the performing arts can be an economic engine that drives spending in local communities and allows workers to prosper. Prior to the pandemic, California ranked just 28th in arts funding. Unfortunately, years of underinvestment have meant that California's SNPAOs do not have the financial or administrative resources to support hourly wages and are facing an uncertain future.

The vast majority of the nearly 1,200 SNPAOs have adjusted gross revenues below \$250,000 and with proper funding, SNPAOs can continue to be job creation engines due to the large number of creative workers required to produce an opera, ballet, symphony or play. An investment in the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund will stabilize the sector and provide tens of thousands of seasonal opportunities each year. Supporters estimate that once all eligible organizations are enrolled in the program, as many as 90,000 full-time, part-time and seasonal employment opportunities will be created annually.

Furthermore, the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund will allow for living wages for creative workers that will help restore the livelihoods of individuals who work in a sector that has been slow to recover from the pandemic.

An investment in the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund will offer meaningful employment to all creative talents in the arts incubator pipeline which is essential to preserve California's position as a global leader in arts and entertainment. The EPF will allow these opportunities to be compensated with living wages and worker protections.

I respectfully request that a \$300 million investment over 3 years to be considered as the legislative budget package is developed and finalized in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony J. Portantino". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Hon. Anthony J. Portantino
25th Senate District