

Even more significant is the return on the investment for the American taxpayer. While the Federal Government spends just over \$250 million on the NEA and NEH annually, it collects over \$10 billion in tax revenue related to the arts industry. Federal funding for the NEA and NEH is crucial to the arts community, helping leverage more state, local, and private funds. Clearly, the numbers show that investment in the arts is important not only to our national identity, but also to our national economy.

Mr. Chairman, we must act decisively to commit ourselves to our national heritage and culture, by voting to increase funding for the NEA and NEH. I urge my colleagues to support creativity and reflection, to support our economy, and to support the continued growth and expression of democracy in its fullest form.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the Slaughter-Shays-Dicks-Leach-Price amendment to provide much needed funds for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

As a scientist, I am often advocating for investments in math, science, and technology research, development, and education. These are worthwhile expenditures that contribute to innovation and economic growth, but our nation requires a parallel investment in the arts to retain the cultural and creative growth that ties our diverse society together.

This modest increase in funding will build programs that use the strength of the arts and our Nation's cultural life to enhance communities in every State and every county around America. The additional funds provided through this amendment would support the very successful Challenge America program, which brings the arts to rural communities and inner-city neighborhoods whose limited resources don't always allow for community arts programs.

In 2005, the Challenge America program provided grants to towns and cities in 99 percent of Congressional districts for jazz and blues festivals, showcases for regional musicians and artists, and public-private partnerships that bring the arts into local schools. Dozens of studies have demonstrated the significant positive effect of arts education on students' academic performance, self esteem, and behavior, and the Challenge America grants are an excellent mechanism to bring the arts to students who can greatly benefit from that exposure.

Similarly, the NEH serves to advance the nation's scholarly and cultural life. The additional funding contained in this amendment would enable NEH to improve the quality of humanities education to America's school children and college students, offer lifelong learning opportunities through a range of public programs, and support new projects that encourage Americans to discover their storied and inspiring national heritage.

It is clear that increasing funding for the arts and humanities are among the best investments that we as a society can make. They help our children learn. They give the elderly sustenance. They power economic development, even in regions that are down and out.

Will the projects that would be sponsored by this increase in funding help defend our country? Probably not, but they will make our country more worth defending. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the bipartisan Arts' Caucus amendment that would fully fund the National Endowment for the Arts, NEA, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, NEH.

I would like to especially thank co-chairs of the Arts Caucus and the authors of the amendment—the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS)—for their leadership on this issue.

In my district, the 9th congressional district of California, more than 10,000 people are employed in arts related jobs. They play an integral role in building and sustaining our local economy.

The AXIS Dance Company, an NEA grants recipient in Oakland California, is just one example of an organization in my community that relies on these funds to sustain their programs.

The AXIS Company includes dancers with and without disabilities. Thanks to an NEA Access to Artistic Excellence Grant, the company launched their first-ever Summer Intensive session last year.

As Judith Smith, the companies' artistic director, explains: "By presenting dance that includes dancers with and without disabilities we show youth what is possible when people with differences collaborate. . . . Ultimately it helps them see that they can do and accomplish whatever they set their mind to. This is the beauty of art."

The AXIS Company is but one example; nationally there are 548,000 arts-related businesses, but it is impossible to count how many lives are impacted by their services. The facts speak for themselves—if you cut arts funding, you cut jobs and opportunities for all.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the Arts' Caucus bipartisan amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER).

The amendment was agreed to.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into a colloquy with the chairman. I would like to thank the gentleman from North Carolina in this colloquy. And, Mr. Chairman, as a resident of Southern California, I have witnessed the impact diesel emissions has had on our air quality. Our constituents are more likely to contract cancer, asthma and other respiratory problems. The emissions from older heavy-duty trucks, in particular, are among the highest contributors of ground level ozone, volatile organic compounds, and particulate pollution in the country. These trucks are the highest polluters among on-road transportation emissions sources.

As a primary player in the movement of goods, diesel engines play an important role in keeping our economy strong. While the administration has taken action with the diesel fuel engine regulations to reduce emissions, the EPA estimates that there are 11 million existing engines that still need to be fixed. This is why providing the

necessary resources for the important diesel initiatives under the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act should be central to any current national transportation plan.

We have worked extremely hard to ensure that Americans may have cleaner air where they work and live. I know, despite the bipartisan support we received for DERA funding, finding the funds for this program was a tough process. Ultimately, while cuts had to be made to DERA's appropriation, I am very proud to have worked with the subcommittee leadership to get the funds that we did receive. However, the fight is not over.

While the \$26 million will go far in the mission for reducing diesel emission, a great deal more is needed. Despite the fact that today's diesel vehicles are 99 percent cleaner than their 1970 counterparts, each older truck contributes an average of 1 ton of pollutants into the air per year. We must make certain that every effort will be made during conference to increase funding above the \$26 million level, or at least to consider keeping it where it is.

So, Mr. Chairman, the DERA program is very important to my district. These funds play a critical role in fully integrating today's technological advances with consumer demands and environmental needs in order to provide cleaner air where our constituents live and work. And I would like just to have the chairman respond that we hope that in the conference, at least the money that has been placed there by the administration will be maintained with perhaps increases if we can.

Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina. Mr. Chairman, the gentlewoman has made a huge contribution on this matter to the committee. We did increase the amount up 12 percent from where we were. But I agree with the gentlewoman, if we can do more in conference, we will try to do it because the great need is there.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

In addition, \$32,696,000 is for Mining Law Administration program operations, including the cost of administering the mining claim fee program; to remain available until expended, to be reduced by amounts collected by the Bureau and credited to this appropriation from annual mining claim fees so as to result in a final appropriation estimated at not more than \$867,738,000, and \$2,000,000, to remain available until expended, from communication site rental fees established by the Bureau for the cost of administering communication site activities.

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses for fire preparedness, suppression operations, fire science and research, emergency rehabilitation, hazardous fuels reduction, and rural fire assistance by the Department of the Interior, \$769,253,000, to remain available until expended, of which not to exceed \$7,338,000 shall be for the renovation or construction of fire facilities: *Provided*, That such funds are also available for repayment of advances to other appropriation accounts from which