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The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs Shaheen and Cartwright and Ranking Members Moran and Aderholt:

We, the undersigned group of arts in juvenile justice stakeholder organizations, write to express our support for continued and expanded funding for the “Arts in Juvenile Justice demonstration project at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in Fiscal Year 2023.

Our organizations thank and applaud both Subcommittees for including language in support of OJJDP’s “Arts in JJ” demonstration program in their respective FY23 reports. We respectfully urge that the Senate’s slightly more expansive and prescriptive language be the basis for any explanatory text to accompany a future FY23 omnibus. Further, we ask that the explanatory text explicitly sets aside \$5 million of OJJDP FY23 funds for purposes of the arts in juvenile justice demonstration program.

The arts and art-therapy are increasingly being utilized in local programs across the juvenile justice spectrum, including prevention, diversion, alternatives to incarceration, secure detention, and reentry. A well-designed, implemented and evaluated Arts in JJ demonstration program at the national level will build on the success of the myriad of local programs and bring greater coherence to the field. The demo program will deepen the existing evidence, uncover new promising practices, offer new metrics for evaluation, and further prove efficacy of arts-based and art therapy models across the juvenile justice continuum.

Through a robust history of research and practice, arts-based programs have proven promising and effective at improving economic, social, and mental health outcomes for youth at risk or involved with the juvenile justice system. In 2020, the Arts Education Partnership published two reports on expanding the arts across the juvenile justice system, citing strategies for effective programming and examples of programs operating across the country. [Engaging the Arts Across](#)

[the Juvenile Justice System](#)¹ (Apr. 2020) explores research and programs that employ the arts along the juvenile justice continuum, including in prevention, intervention, transition, and healing. [Expanding the Arts Across the Juvenile Justice System](#)² (October, 2020) is a brief that builds on the prior report by capturing the insights and policy considerations that came out of a Thinkers Meeting with 11 experts in the arts education and juvenile justice fields.

Moreover, in May 2021, OJJDP updated its own literature review examining “[Arts-Based Programs and Arts Therapies for At-Risk, Justice-Involved, and Traumatized Youths](#).” The review found that, “arts-based programs and arts therapies provide a unique way to help youths in times of transition and development... provid[ing] a nonthreatening, engaging way for children and adolescents to express their feelings, manage emotional and behavioral problems, express cultural awareness, cope with trauma and victimization, develop artistic talents and skills, and improve strengths and assets they already possess.” The OJJDP literature also calls for additional research and demonstrations to further identify how arts can directly affect the behavior of at-risk, justice-involved, and traumatized youths.

Now is the time to build upon the research and work that is already underway to ensure that our nation’s most vulnerable young people have the same opportunities to succeed as other children. Thank you for your ongoing support for the arts for justice-involved youth and for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Allegheny Intermediate Unit	Pennsylvania
American Art Therapy Association	Virginia
American Composers Forum	Minnesota
Americans for the Arts	District of Columbia
ArtPride New Jersey	New Jersey
Austin Classical Guitar	Texas
Baltimore Classical Guitar Society, Inc.	Maryland
Carnegie Hall	New York
Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators	Massachusetts
Dance/USA	District of Columbia
Educational Theatre Association	Ohio
Florida State University/FSU-FDC Art Therapy in Prisons Program	Florida
National Partnership for Juvenile Services	Kentucky
OPERA America	New York
Tallahassee Bail Fund	California

¹ Johnson, K. Pechota, D. (2020) *Engaging the Arts Across the Juvenile Justice System*. Arts Education Partnership. <https://www.ecs.org/expanding-the-arts-across-the-juvenile-justice-system/>

² Pechota, D. Johnson, K. (2020) *Expanding the Arts Across the Juvenile Justice System*. Arts Education Partnership. <https://www.ecs.org/expanding-the-arts-across-the-juvenile-justice-system/>

Texans for the Arts

Texas