

Testimony in support of House Bill 2766, March 8, 2012

To: House Committee on Education Budget

From: Vicki Buening, 1255 SW High St., Topeka, KS.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 2766.

I am a life-long Kansan currently serving on the board of directors for the Kansas Citizens for the Arts, which is a group of thousands of concerned Kansans who are working to restore public funding for the arts in Kansas. I believe that public funding for the arts is crucial to the healthy economic development of our state requiring a minimal investment that reaps huge dividends.

In 2010, my husband and I paid \$8,081 in state income taxes to support a broad number of services in Kansas. A little over one quarter of that, and I mean \$.29 ---not ¼ of our taxes or \$2000 --- \$.29 went to support public funding of the arts.

In today's economy, there's not much that \$.25 will buy but let me tell you what this quarter provided:

1. **It ensured that all Kansans had access to the arts**, regardless of economic status or community size;
2. **It provided educational opportunities** that enriched the creative, innovative and problem solving skills necessary for a competitive economy; and
3. **It fostered economic development and improved the quality of life** of all communities.
4. **In particular, it leveraged \$1.2 Million in grants with \$66,000** coming to 13 organizations to my home county.

We are calling upon the foresight of our Legislature to support HB2766 which would move the Kansas Arts Commission to the Kansas Department of Commerce and reinstate public funding of the arts in Kansas. With the addition of sufficient funding, the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission would be able to hire the staff needed to qualify for federal matching dollars and provide important support to communities and programs throughout our state.

Thank you.