

South Carolina Legislature Overturns Governor's Arts Veto

June 29, 2011

Today the South Carolina state legislature overturned Governor Nikki Haley's veto of the South Carolina Arts Commission (SCAC) fiscal year 2012 budget.

On June 28, Governor Haley used her line-item veto authority to attempt to eliminate all state funding for SCAC in fiscal year 2012. The legislature acted swiftly to reverse this decision. Both chambers voted by overwhelming margins (105 to 8 in the House and 32 to 6 in the Senate) to override the veto, reinstating their recommended appropriation of \$1.9 million for the Arts Commission.

South Carolina communities and families are well served by this action, which represents the will of South Carolina residents. More than 92% of South Carolinians favor public funding for the arts, according to a [statewide poll](#) by the University of South Carolina. The people in South Carolina—and citizens across the nation, too—favor public investment in the arts because they know that the arts make a state a desirable place to live, work, play, visit, conduct business and raise a family.

As in other states, lawmakers in South Carolina have been faced with daunting economic challenges. Public officials must necessarily scrutinize the return on investment of all public dollars and consider every available policy tool. Such consideration reveals that state arts agencies offer a positive payoff. Although it comprises only 0.032% of South Carolina's \$6 billion state budget, legislative funding to SCAC provides essential leadership that helps the state to develop its creative industries (which return more than [\\$9.2 billion](#) to South Carolina), prepare a competitive work force, revitalize distressed areas, and secure a good standard of living for residents.

With its recent action, the South Carolina legislature affirmed not only the monetary benefits of the arts—such as jobs, revenues and attracting new industries—but also the essence of the arts as a public good. When children receive a creative education that inspires their achievement and motivates them to stay in school, everybody benefits. When the arts transform blighted public spaces, everybody benefits. And when the unique cultural heritage and traditions of a state are passed on to future generations, everybody benefits. Every state needs a state arts agency to ensure that all communities—not just those that are wealthy or urban—have equal access to these assets.

In overriding Governor Haley's veto of the SCAC budget by such large margins, the South Carolina legislature demonstrated its recognition that maintaining a public investment in the arts is sound public policy that makes sense to people across the political spectrum.

For more information, or to arrange an interview with NASAA CEO Jonathan Katz, please contact NASAA Communications Manager Sue Struve, sue.struve@nasaa-arts.org; 202-347-6352 x109.