

ArtServe Michigan

How to Effectively Answer Your Legislators Response to Your Email

Have you received a response from your legislator about your email? Does the response leave you feeling angry and frustrated as they try to skirt the issue or give you the “tough choices” reply?

Fight back! You have just as much right to respond to their email as they responded to you. Use this opportunity as a launching pad to speak to them on a regular basis about the recommended cuts. Keep them informed as you receive new information from ArtServe.

Below you will find actual partial responses from legislators that have either been sent to me in response to my emails or to other arts and cultural supporters. Take a look and use these sample responses, as your response, when you get an email from your elected officials. Have a question or need help with your response? Feel free to contact Mike Latvis at 248-379-5897 or by e-mail at mike@artservemichigan.org.

Legislator: “As you know, Michigan is facing tough economic times and this requires all of us to make tough choices. I understand and share in your concerns about funding for the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.”

Sample Response – If you vote in favor of any package that includes nearly zeroing out grants for arts and cultural affairs then you are voting to lay off hundreds, if not thousands, of people in our district and throughout this state. Are you ready to justify the “tough decisions” stance to people that will get laid off?

Legislator: “Balancing the budget will require painful reductions and hopefully real reform and there is no way to do it without impacting some parts of budget. If you have suggestions on where else we can find this amount of savings with less pain or more long-term reform, I’d find that helpful in my decision-making process.”

Sample Response – I understand that tough decisions must be made, but \$8 million out of a \$44 billion budget does nothing to cure the structural deficit in this state. Cutting funding across the state, year after year, is just passing the buck to the next administration and legislature. I encourage you to review the reforms proposed by the Center for Michigan as a reference to a true solution.

Legislator: “I am opposed to the use of taxpayer money to fund the arts. Art is an expression of ideas, and using taxpayers’ money to promote ideas they may not agree with is a violation of their rights. Such misuse of taxpayer money does not promote freedom of speech; it violates it. The world of ideas should never depend upon government handouts, and the creators of ideas cannot expect others to subsidize their efforts.”

Sample Response – I understand your position, but don’t you understand that taxpayers’ money is grossly misused throughout this budget in which we don’t get a say in what we want to fund? The money that the state grants to organizations is not a handout, it is a dedication to a public/private partnership that garners over \$310 million in matching funds that will disappear if the state zeros out funding. Are you ready to justify your stance to people that will get laid off because of these cuts?