

CITY OF WILKES-BARRE
Pennsylvania

Thomas M. Leighton
Mayor



40 East Market Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711-0451

(570) 208-4152 phone
(570) 208-4101 fax

OFFICE OF THE
MAYOR

November 15, 2007

Governor Edward G. Rendell
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Rendell:

I am writing to urge you to include an increase of \$2 million dollars in the budget for the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Please consider this increase per year for the next few years. The arts are a critical part of our efforts to revitalize our downtown and serve our citizens across the county.

As you saw at your arts awards last year held here in Wilkes-Barre, hundreds of supporters of the arts came out to celebrate with you and the First Lady. We were proud to host this singular event, the first time the awards came to northeast Pennsylvania. If anyone had doubts about the importance of the arts to the people in the northeast, that evening dispelled them. There are too few occasions for the arts community to come together and therefore few people have the chance to understand how much it means to our fellow citizens to have these cultural services in our city and county.

Further evidence of the importance of the arts can be seen any of the 200+ nights the F M Kirby Center for the Performing Arts is open for business. Another restaurant just opened on the square and when the Kirby is open, business is good. I am aware that the PCA has been assisting the Kirby Center with their efforts to expand and enhance their work. You should know that the funding you provide through the PCA is an important piece but not the only piece of the value of this agency to our community.

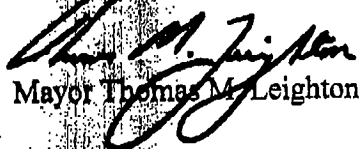
The staff of the PCA has been of great assistance to us. We are hopeful too that we will be able to develop more local support for the arts and the PCA staff has been helping us with that strategy as well.

We see real potential for the arts to assist us in many ways, with our challenges and opportunities. Your leadership in this area would be a real encouragement to everyone here to grow our own commitment to the arts.

We have also benefited from PCA support to other areas of the state. Recently, the Bradford County Regional Arts Council provided training to Headstart Centers in our county. The BCRAC is known internationally for its work in enhancing the impact of the early childhood education by incorporating the arts. Thanks to the PCA the Kirby Center will host the Paul Taylor Dance Company for the first time. This is part of a landmark statewide tour initiated by the PCA that will keep this company touring in Pennsylvania for about a month at fees far below the usual price for booking this company.

I hope you will seriously consider making this increase to the PCA possible. It will be a great investment in our region.

Sincerely,



Mayor Thomas M. Leighton

PHYLLIS MUNDY, MEMBER

PARK OFFICE BUILDING
SUITE 113
400 THIRD AVENUE
KINGSTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18704
PHONE: (570) 283-9822
(570) 656-3375

36 EAST WING
P.O. BOX 202120
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2120
PHONE: (717) 783-1814



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

CHAIRMAN,
AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES

COMMITTEES

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CHILDREN AND YOUTH
DEMOCRATIC POLICY
MEMBER, SPEAKER'S COMMISSION
ON LEGISLATIVE REFORM
RULES

November 29, 2007

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell, Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Rendell:

I am writing to urge your consideration of an annual \$2 million increase in the budget for the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

You and the First Lady have done a wonderful job in supporting the arts in Pennsylvania and in the Northeast, as was evidenced by your attendance at last year's arts awards held in Wilkes-Barre. I know that you understand the importance of the arts to our communities and our region as a whole — both culturally and economically.

Each year brings an increase in the number of funding requests made to the Council. Unfortunately, with no budget increase, funding to certain organizations in Luzerne County — the NEPA Philharmonic, the Sordoni Art Gallery, and the F.M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts — has been reduced. Without an increase in funding, the positive cultural and economic contribution that these venues have on our county will be sadly eroded. It is not very often that we, as policy making public servants, have the opportunity to take action that can support and enhance these two vital but divergent areas. This is one of those opportunities.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Mundy

Rep. Phyllis Mundy
120th Legislative District
PA House of Representatives