

# *Arts in Crisis: A Kennedy Center Initiative Comments*

June 30, 2009

“Nearly six million people make their living in the non-profit arts industry and arts and cultural activities contribute more than \$160 billion to our economy every year. The President provided an additional \$50 million in funding to the NEA in the Recovery Act to preserve jobs in state arts agencies and regional arts organizations in order to keep them up and running during the economic downturn. Our future as an innovative country depends on ensuring that everyone has access to the arts and to cultural opportunities and the *Arts in Crisis* initiative addresses this important intersection of creativity and commerce.”

– *First Lady Michelle Obama*

“Arts organizations are facing the same challenges as America’s families and communities; in this recession, it is tough to make ends meet. Yet as President John F. Kennedy once said, ‘The life of the arts – far from being an interruption in the life of a nation – is very close to the center of a nation’s purpose.’ That is why I applaud Michael Kaiser and the Kennedy Center for the *Arts in Crisis* initiative, which is helping to preserve arts organizations that are struggling during this difficult time. In so doing, we are ensuring a vibrant cultural life for our nation for generations to come.”

– *Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi*

“The recent closure of the Las Vegas Art museum – which had been operating continuously since 1974 – shows that this economic recession is taking a serious toll on our art institutions in Nevada and throughout our nation. The Kennedy Center’s *Arts in Crisis* provides hands-on training that will enable struggling arts organizations to emerge from the economic downturn stronger than ever. I know that the arts in Nevada will benefit from the Kennedy Center’s expert advice and I look forward to Mr. Kaiser’s visit to my state.”

– *Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid*

“Like many Kentuckians, I appreciate the contributions of the arts and humanities in enriching our communities and I would like to thank the Kennedy Center for lending its considerable fundraising and management expertise to help local arts agencies weather these difficult times.”

– *Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell*

“At this time of economic challenge for our country, families and small businesses are struggling to make ends meet, and the same can be said of arts organizations throughout our nation. I commend Michael Kaiser and the Kennedy Center for stepping up to help arts organizations in communities across America to weather the storm, sharing their expertise and counsel at a time when they’re needed most.”

– *House Minority Leader John Boehner*

“*Arts in Crisis* is an important effort to ensure the continued vitality of so many worthy cultural organizations across the country. With this program, the Kennedy Center pledges its full support to America’s diverse artistic expression. It is an especially important effort during these difficult economic times and I commend Michael Kaiser for his leadership and vision.”

– *Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts*

“The Kennedy Center’s *Arts in Crisis* initiative will help ensure that America’s treasured arts organizations have the knowledge they need to survive this economic downturn. I congratulate the Kennedy Center – and Michael Kaiser in particular – for their robust engagement in this worthy cause.”

– *Senator Dianne Feinstein of California*

“Arts organizations across the United States face challenges because of the current economy. I am glad the Kennedy Center has provided an avenue for performing arts groups to receive financial and management counsel to help survive the current economic climate and thrive in the future.”

– *Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi*

“The economic downturn has adversely affected numerous sectors nationwide, including the arts. Many arts organizations across the country are facing serious financial challenges, and I commend Mr. Kaiser and the Kennedy Center for stepping forward to offer assistance. The *Arts in Crisis* Initiative will not only save jobs at struggling arts organizations, but it will ensure that a vital part of American culture continues to thrive.”

– *Representative James L. Oberstar of Minnesota*

“I applaud the Kennedy Center’s initiative to support arts groups during this difficult economic time. Through the *Arts in Crisis* initiative, these organizations will be assisted by their national partner in a mutual effort to continue bringing the arts to communities across our nation.”

– *Representative John L. Mica of Florida*

“Arts groups across the country have always been and will continue to be a vital part of our communities. Unfortunately, the economic recession has left many struggling, potentially forced to close their doors, affecting thousands of jobs. I am pleased that the Kennedy Center has undertaken this initiative to aid these arts organizations and ensure we maintain a strong and vibrant cultural community.”

– *Representative Rosa L. DeLauro of Connecticut*

"It is encouraging to see the Kennedy Center expand the *Arts in Crisis* initiative to provide an additional helping hand to struggling arts groups in communities all across our country. Michael Kaiser and the Kennedy Center's executive staff are to be commended for the leadership role being undertaken to ensure the arts continue to thrive in all 50 states."

– *Representative Roy Blunt of Missouri*