INTERSECTIONAL GRASSROOTS “BE AN #ARTSHERO” CAMPAIGN CALLS ON U.S. SENATE TO PASS EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR THE ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR BY AUGUST 1

Citizen Organizers call for the 5.1 million Americans employed in the Arts & Culture sector to mobilize for proportionate economic relief

NEW YORK, July 10, 2020 — “Be An #ArtsHero,” an intersectional grassroots campaign to get the U.S. Senate to pass emergency Arts relief, calls on the 5.1 million Americans employed in the U.S. Arts & Culture sector to urge all 100 Senators to pass massive economic relief by August 1st. Be An #ArtsHero mobilizes all Arts workers, institutions, and anyone who relies on the Arts economically or personally, to use their individual and organizational platforms and apply pressure on their Senators.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE ARTS

The call for funding is based on economic data that proves there can be no full American economic recovery without an Arts & Culture recovery. The Arts & Culture sector is 4.5% of GDP and responsible for up to $877 billion in value added to the U.S. economy, according to data collected by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA). Arts organizations add more to GDP than Agriculture, Transportation, Construction, and Tourism.

Investing in the Arts & Culture sector has an exponential economic return on investment: for every $1 of NEA funding, it leverages $9 in private and public dollars that fuels a dynamic cultural economy. A pennies per capita annual investment has helped to leverage a nonprofit Arts industry of almost 100,000 organizations, serving millions of citizens in every part of America. Nonprofit Arts organizations and their audiences generate $135 billion in economic activity that supports 5.1 million jobs throughout those communities.

The average annual growth rate for Arts & Culture outperforms that of the total U.S. economy, meaning investing in Arts & Culture is an essential tactic for propelling the economy out of a recession. From 2014 to 2016, the average annual growth rate in the contribution of Arts & Culture was 4.16%, nearly double the total U.S. economy’s 2.22% growth rate. To that end, Be An #ArtsHero advocates that the Arts & Culture sector receive proportionate relief to the contribution to the U.S. Economy it provides. “The Arts & Culture sector is not a luxury, it is a cornerstone of the American economy and necessitates proportionate relief immediately,” said Be An #ArtsHero Citizen Organizer Jenny Grace Makholm.

THE ASKS
• Immediate extension of the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program (FPUC) until all Arts & Culture institutions are safe to fully re-open.
• 100% subsidy for the COBRA program to protect workers’ healthcare, with eligibility extended to 36 months.
• Relief should be administered by the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting—public institutions best equipped with infrastructure to disburse funds quickly and directly to Artists, as well as Arts & Culture unions and institutions.
• Guarantee that a fair percentage of relief be apportioned in direct grants and relief to individual Artists and small Arts organizations representing the underrepresented, oppressed, and marginalized communities in our country, specifically toward BIPOC, LGBTQ+, differently-abled, and the economically disadvantaged.
• Allow all nonprofits fair access to government economic support in the Paycheck Protection Program, including labor unions.
• Update the Qualified Performing Artist tax deduction, allowing creative professionals to keep more of their hard-earned money by deducting necessary business expenses from their taxes (now due in July).
• Follow the lead of the U.K. and Germany and commit billions of dollars in direct relief to Artists, their institutions, their unions, and all others who comprise the Arts & Culture economic ecosystem.

A WORLD WITHOUT ARTISTS?
"We all know how important the Arts have been during this crisis. Whether it’s watching Netflix, playing video games, listening to music, livestream play readings, socially distanced concerts, or finally getting to see Hamilton…the Arts are getting us through COVID. It's unfathomable to imagine that the very thing that's kept us emotionally and mentally intact during this time is in such grave danger," said Carson Elrod, Be An #ArtsHero Citizen Organizer. Be An #ArtsHero urges all Americans to reflect on the impact the Arts and Artists have had on their time during the stay-at-home orders, and asks them to join the movement to urge their Senators to craft and pass massive relief for the Arts & Culture sector, in advance of the expiration of FPUC on August 1st. “BIPOC, LGBTQ+, differently-abled, and elderly communities are often overlooked when it comes to robust Arts funding and general economic support. We need direct relief to ensure their continued growth and prosperity,” said Be An #ArtsHero Citizen Organizer Brooke Ishibashi.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE
The campaign harnesses the creative capacity and institutional infrastructure of the entire Arts & Culture sector, including Artistic institutions, Arts workers, unions, and (ultimately) every single person who values the role of the Arts in their lives. In essence: everyone. Be An #ArtsHero calls on allies of the movement to take the following steps:

• Visit BeAnArtsHero.com
• Read and download the Action Packet for step-by-step instructions on how individuals and organizations can take the necessary steps to convince Senators of the importance of immediate action.
• Contact your Senators: call, write, tweet, tag and ask them, “Will you Be An #ArtsHero”?—the Action Packet has template letters.
● Share the resource graphics on your websites, social media profiles, and email newsletters.
● Follow “Be An Arts Hero” on social media and use #ArtsHero.

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**ABOUT BE AN #ARTSHERO**

Be An #ArtsHero is an intersectional grassroots campaign to mobilize all Arts & Culture workers, unions, institutions, and anyone who relies on the Arts economically or personally, to use their individual and organizational platforms and convince all 100 U.S. Senators to Be An #ArtsHero by passing massive Arts relief by August 1st. The campaign mobilizes the 5.1 million Americans employed in these industries, as well as those who value the role of the Arts in their lives, to pressure the U.S. Senate to pass immediate emergency legislation for the Arts economy in crisis.

**Brooke Chiemi Ishibashi** (“Chih-em-ih”) (“Ih-shih-ba-shi”) (she/her/hers) is a 4th generation Japanese American actor and singer, core member of Fair Wage Onstage, and National Councilor for Actors’ Equity Association. She originated and developed the role of Neary in *Cambodian Rock Band* and is passionate about work that explores anti-racism, social justice, and trans-generational trauma.

**Carson Elrod** (he/him/his) is a professional actor, teacher, coach, director, and labor activist living in Brooklyn, NY. He's had the unique experience of working across the performing Arts & Culture sector in Film, Television, on Broadway, Off-Broadway, with the Metropolitan Opera, the Boston Symphony, in Cabaret, and improvisational institutions such as The Upright Citizens Brigade.

**Jenny Grace Makholm** (Mack-olm) (she/her/hers) is a Brooklyn-based writer, actor, director and producer, committed to creating and participating in intersectional feminist work. Notable written work includes: *Vanquished* (2019 Eugene O’Neill Finalist, 2020 21st Century Voices New Play Finalist, 2020 Jane Chambers Excellence in Feminist Playwriting Award Finalist), and *Relent* (NYIT Nominated Musical).