

Arts Advocacy News

illinois arts alliance

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Cast Your Vote - Make Your Voice Count

Urge Governor Blagojevich to Restore Arts and Arts Education Funding

80% of Voters Want More Arts Education in Schools

Help Expand Cable Access to the Arts

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Tomorrow, Tuesday, February 5th, remember to vote in the Illinois presidential primary. As advocates, we work to effect change in our communities through empowerment and participation. The right to vote is one of the most important tools in our toolbox; exercising it is not only our right, but also our duty. Take a moment to vote tomorrow and remind family, friends, and colleagues to do the same.

While Illinois wasn't a stop along the campaign trail for many candidates, their positions on the arts and arts education are easily accessible. Democratic hopefuls Senators [Barack Obama](#) and [Hillary Clinton](#) as well as former presidential candidates [Senator John Edwards](#) and [Governor Bill Richardson](#) all released statements in support of the arts. Click on the individual's name to download his or her statement.

On the Republican side, Governor Mike Huckabee has expressly stated his support for the arts and arts education. To read the Governor's statement on the arts, [click here](#).

To learn more about the candidates' positions on the arts, visit [ArtsVote](#), a project of Americans for the Arts Action Fund. To locate your polling place, please contact your county clerk or visit their website.

Urge Governor Blagojevich to Restore Arts and Arts Education Funding

Governor Set to Unveil FY2009 State Budget on February 20th

2007 was a tragedy for arts and arts education funding in Illinois. At the end of a very long and difficult legislative process, we saw funding for the Illinois Arts Council reduced by \$7 million – the largest percent decrease in the Council's 42-year history. We also saw the complete elimination of important funding for the Arts & Foreign Language grant program at the Illinois State Board of Education, a program that was established just two years ago.

These devastating cuts threaten the stability of the arts infrastructure in Illinois and

represent one of the most critical issues facing the cultural sector in our state today.

On Wednesday, February 20th, Governor Rod Blagojevich is expected to release his proposed FY2009 budget. It is essential that arts advocates speak out and make their voices heard before the Governor's announcement and throughout the budget process.

[Please take a moment to contact Governor Blagojevich about restoring our state's investment in the arts and arts education.](#) With our action alert system, we've made this easy to do in just minutes. Now more than ever, your ongoing commitment to the arts is critical.

80% of Voters Want More Arts Education in Schools

Voters strongly support the integration of arts education into the core curriculum of every school, according to a survey sponsored by the Arts Education Partnership (AEP), a national coalition of 140 arts, education, government, and business groups.

Pollsters Celinda, Lake & Associates sampled a national cross-section of voters in conducting the survey. 80% of respondents said that the 21st-century economy requires more than "the basics" now stressed in U.S. schools and indicated that they were worried about a perceived decline in arts education in schools. 30% said that they themselves are "passionate" about the issue and see the arts as fundamental to education. A bipartisan majority of those surveyed support instruction in "creativity, innovation, and imagination" as a preparation for life as well as the workforce.

[Click here](#) to read the AEP's report on the survey.

Help Expand Cable Access to the Arts Urge Comcast to Carry Ovation TV, the Only National Arts Network

Ovation TV, the only national network to focus on art and personal creativity, is now on the air in over 25 million households nationwide through DIRECTV, DISH, and select cable providers. Ovation TV has strong relationships with a range of arts and cultural institutions in Illinois and provides a platform for cultural organizations to bring their programs to a national audience.

The ability of Chicago and Illinois cultural groups to fully utilize this resource, though, has met obstacles. Comcast currently packages Ovation TV on a sports programming tier that reaches only a small fraction of their Chicago-area subscribers.

Help ensure Ovation TV reaches the broadest possible audience in Illinois with its arts and family-friendly programming. To learn more about Ovation TV, [click here](#). To act now and send a message to Comcast about expanding cable access to the arts, [click here](#).

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