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>> Good afternoon everyone and welcome to today's event Advocacy 101 Webinar, our second in the year-long series about advocacy training webinars that we will be doing this year. I will be your moderator today. My name is Nina Ozlu Tunceli and I am both the Chief Counsel Of Government and Public Affairs at Americans for the Arts and I'm the Executive Director of the Arts Action Fund I use she/her pronouns and to describe myself I am a Middle Eastern woman with shoulder length black hair, wearing a red turtleneck and a background image behind me of our arts work that was created for us by artist Shepherd Barry. I am speaking today from Arlington Virginia which sits on the ancestral lands of the Powhatan's. We have got a great program for you today, and I'm excited to get started but first a few quick reminders, as you can see we are highlighting our speakers today that you will hear from each one and I will introduce each one before they begin, so please note that this presentation is being recorded, the recording will be available in just a few business days probably by the end of this week on the current activity page here for Arts You as well as on the Advocacy 101 resource center page that I have highlighted at the bottom of this image, located at artsactionfund.org/advocacy-101-resource-center-2023. Also an automated live transcript is available for viewing while you are watching today. To turn it on or off, press the CC or closed captions button at the bottom of your screen, then select show or hide subtitles. Today's Advocacy 101 resources as well as all of the speaker's PowerPoint slides will be posted in two places. It's already available for downloading on the Arts Action Fund Site, where you have that URL listed on the bottom of the left side of the screen, and if you come back to the Arts You website, which is on Americans for the Arts, you will see a resource section added with all of these resources as well, and that will happen later this week. The video recording link for today's webinar will also be posted on both of the sites that I just mentioned, and will be available at the end of this week. There will be a time for your questions at the end of today's presentations. 15 minutes for questions and answers and you can submit your questions beginning now in the Q&A function, please do not use the chat section, use the Q&A and if you want to make sure the question is asked, you want to upvote someone who may have already posted the question, because I'll take the questions beginning from the top and they represent the most popular questions though most people want to hear from. Should you need any technical assistance today please put them in the chat box and send it to Mital@Afta, who is in this program, and she will be sure to follow up with you. And with that I'm very pleased to start today's programming by introducing our speaker. Next slide please. Nolen Bivens is the President and CEO of Americans for the Arts, and I am so pleased to invite my boss to begin the show. Nolen!

>> Yes Nina, good afternoon to everyone. It definitely is my pleasure to be here to open today's webinar, and also to welcome everyone that's participating throughout the audience. As we come to you today, I wanted to just emphasize one thing and the word is advocacy. And here in Americans for the Arts, we are expanding and continue to build upon that and a way that we're referring to it here is equitable advocacy, which really means in a broad term that we're trying to look art through the lens of the economic impact of the arts social cultural and educational we also want to do that in an equitable way, and reaching all the corners of arts, whether it's rural, urban or suburban, and in different parts of the of the country that's being served by the art. Really it is my pleasure and honor to welcome you here, so excited for the program we have. We have some great speakers, and are excited to get on with that, and so I'll pass it back to Nina. Thank you again.

>> Thank you, Nolen. So now that we can begin our educational portion of the program, I'm going to invite David Reid to join me. He is Policy Director at Brownstein, which is the largest lobbying firm in Washington, DC. They are-- They are part of a law firm that has headquarters in Denver, Colorado, and they have been successfully serving our field at Americans for the Arts as a pro bono client of theirs. So I really appreciate David, and welcome to a series of calls that we're gonna have together to talk about things. But what I'd like to first begin with is to let folks know that earlier this year we created a policy survey to check in with our field members about what are the policies that are most important for us to pursue as policy objectives in Congress and so I want to share the top 4 that came and thank you for our ASL interpreters joining us now. Welcome! So the top funding issues will be reflected in the programming that we do today. Number one by far, was funding for the National Endowment of the Arts. Number two was Arts Education, funding through the Department of Education. Third was Arts funding again, but through various other federal agencies, and you'll hear about some very interesting ones at the Department of Defense and Veterans, and then finally, charitable tax incentives to increase private giving to the arts. So with that as the backdrop of what we are focusing our policy agenda on this year, I want to share before I ask David some questions. What our 2023 congressional timeline is looking like this year, and with the help of David, we put this together. So we are now in what's called the 118th Congress, because Congress begins anew every 2 years. So if a bill didn't get enacted into law by the end of the 117th Congress, which ended at the end of 2022, little bit of 2023, it essentially dies, and it has to be reintroduced and each Congress lasts 2 years, so you can see how many years we've successfully as a country been exhibiting democracy through these Congresses every 2 years. In the first quarter, January through March. It was really a lot of housekeeping, especially after an election, where party control changes. The house is now controlled by Republicans. The Senate is fully in control of Democrats. Last year they had to share, because it was equal between Republicans and Democrats in the Senate, but now there's a full majority in the Senate, and we awaited the President's Budget for what the White House would like Congress to put together for funding for Fy24. So just so everyone understands, even though the year is 2023, what we're lobbying for is Fy24 funding, which would efficiently begin with the Congressional calendar on October 1, 2023 so it's a few months of 2023, and the majority of 24, that covers that fiscal year, and then you'll see as I go through this quarterly calendar, the likelihood of it all happening so neatly is probably very little, so for the second quarter which we're going to begin in just a couple of days. We are expecting the House of Representatives to introduce their own Republican budget of what they would like to do. And we're gonna be asking David what those anticipations are. Also what we'd like advocates to do is to get as many of your members of Congress to join Caucuses that some of our speakers are going to speak about later on today. Sponsor or introduce certain policy bills. And then we're gonna be seeing Congress conduct a series of budget hearings. Now in your States, budget appropriations mean the same thing, but not on Capitol Hill. Here in the capital here, here in Washington, DC. There is a budget committee that determines the overall allocation of money that each of the appropriation subcommittees can spend, and then that begins the appropriations process to try to get as much funding for the issues that we care about within those bills. And then there will be committee hearings, and then we're gonna see a hiccup happen around the debt ceiling that David's gonna talk about in a moment. In the third quarter we're gonna see the Senate take more heavy action as opposed to the House, doing a ton of House appropriations. Constitutionally, the House has to go first, and then the Senate goes after that, and setting their appropriation levels, their allocations are going to be slightly different, and there becomes conflicts already, and then you'll see a big recess and for the month of August where they're back home in your districts, opportunities for you to meet your members of Congress, invite them to your events of Congress, throughout the month of August, and theoretically, as I mentioned, the fiscal year ends for the Federal Government on September 30th 2023, very likely. What a continuing resolution known as a CR, will have to take place, because they have not finished that kind of appropriation. I guess I've been doing this for 30 years, and it hasn't been done in 30 years. Probably even longer and then in the fourth quarter is where the real serious negotiations happen between the House and Senate to try to get something done, and with that I'd like to take down this slide and bring on David for the first question. Thank you David. Can you give us a sense of what the political landscape is in Washington today with a divided Congress and how it's going to work this year?

>> Sure, and as you mentioned, you know, we've got the Senate remains in a Democratic -- Democrats' hands. The House flips to the Republicans, although it's a very slim majority, as some of you may recall, there was a series of votes that now Speaker Mccarthy had to go through in order to secure his speakership, 15 to be exact which is the most in history and that's because he's got quite a rock-us caucus, and that really does sort of spell what it's going to look like and what it has looked like so far on some of the things that we are looking to get done. So he's got to do some wrangling to get his caucus to get it moving in the direction and some of these must pass pieces done, and the most important for us is the appropriations bills. So as we are making the case for increased funding, for the arts funding for the NEA, for some of the programs we are looking to include, an increase in arts education and arts funding and other agencies, we really have to take into account that particular dynamic. So with the flip obviously you are going to have champions, more champions in the Senate, as we’re looking at the budget that was released by the president, there was an increase in the arts funding that we were happy to see. You're likely gonna see the Senate you know, either take that or increase that in the requests that they put through. And you know, when we start to see those appropriations bills come together over the coming months. The house is most likely not going to. And that is where a number, a bit of our a good bit of our efforts are currently. But again, those are the types of dynamics that we are seeing and working to navigate.

>> David, could you talk about some of the specific rules that can make it really challenging in the House as a result of the change in leadership and the things that Speaker Mccarthy had to agree to by the more conservative side of his caucus.

>> Yes, there's two main things, I think, that are important here. One is the, you know, the commitment he made and others in his caucus made him make that would bring our spending levels down to the 2022 levels. So what he is committed to, and he's likely not going to be successful in doing this, is producing a budget that has our spending levels at a 2 year, you know, at the spending levels that were 2 years ago. But he has said that he is going to hold harmless social security and medicare as well as defense spending. So if he were to actually do that, if the House Republicans were actually to do that, that would decimate almost every just, you know, non discretionary or discretionary, rather a domestic program that would be politically perilous for a number of folks both folks in the Democratic party as well as his own caucus, and the other thing is and we don’t see that actually coming because of the political peril that would create. The other is creating a modified, open rule process. So that sounds complicated but essentially what it is he is attempting through his messaging attempting to open up legislating on the floor of representatives and that essentially gives more folks the rank and file the ability to propose amendments around pieces of legislation that will be making their way to the floor. And what that essentially means is that we need to track those amendments as they are put forward because it may be amendments that are brought forth that try to cut back that funding we are trying to fight for day in and day out and might be trying to go after programs that we care about. Which makes it important to obtain those strong relationships with the act, your help ensure that they are voting against certain amendments that may come to the floor or good amendments that actually might benefit the community. So you know the way that they have done it is a modified open rule so that essentially allows for us to see what the amendments are, generally the day before, and we can go through, and then we can immediately go into that strategy. Us having those conversations with key staff as well as you all having those conversations with those members and their teams that you all have gotten to know.

>> And David to kinda illustrate this point. So later on, in today's webinar, we're going to hear about key leaders on various different committees that have it over powering and domineering influence on what happens with legislation. But when something comes to the floor, every member of Congress becomes important because they all have a vote. So when David was saying, we only get one day's notice, what that means is you need to be developing relationships with your members of Congress. Now, so that when we need them to vote against a weakening amendment or vote for a positive amendment, you're not first introducing yourself, you have already developed that relationship. They know that you are a reliable resource for your community as a constituent, and that will make all the difference for us to be able to win these victories in the House, especially that rule doesn't apply in the Senate, but it does apply in the House. And I want to ask you one last question, David, and that is about threats to the Government to shutdowns. As a result of this divided government. What do you see happening?

>> Sure. So the threat of Government shutdown, you know there are a few ones that you've heard, and we've mentioned is around the debt limit. Now that's not necessarily the part that would lead to the Government shutdown, but that would lead to a default which would be catastrophic. I don't foresee that happening, but there does need to be a deal to come together between the House Republicans and the White House. Those are the 2 key parties that are having the negotiations around the debt limit. At this point, which is likely to, you know, buttress up to around mid to late June, which is when that needs to be resolved the other is a government shutdown. And basically what you know, that would happen if we were not to come to a resolution around the appropriations bill before the September thirtieth deadline, which is the end of the fiscal year. What we'll likely see and Nina mentioned this before is a continuing resolution. So that would essentially be a bill that would be put in place to allow for the continued funding of the Government for a certain period of time at the same levels as Fy 23. That would take us to another type of point in time later this year, where the negotiations would hopefully take us to the negotiations or to wrap up around an omnibus -- omnibus bill which would take us into the remainder of fy 24. A lot has to happen between now and September thirtieth as Nina mentioned we're having those conversations with our members and with our champions, to ensure that our priorities are incorporated into the bills that are being discussed and being negotiated. But as we get to that deadline, that's when things are really gonna start to, you know, rubber hitting the road, and we'll be making sure that we're in the room making the case for what we care about as they finalize the negotiations.

>> Thank you, David. Thank you for being here we're going to now move on to our next speaker, which will be Jay Dick, who is our Senior Director Of State and Local Government Affairs at Americans for the Arts, and what he's going to do is give the basics of advocacy and tips and best practices of moving forward on how you as grassroots advocates across the country can be an effective arts advocate for the country. Jay. Can you come on now?

>> Hey! How are you doing? Thanks, everyone. I'm so glad to be with you today. So as Nina said, I'm gonna give you some general tips on how to go about starting to advocate. Some of you might know some of these, but some of you might not know all of this, and so I think I'm gonna have some secrets for everyone here. Next slide please so let's just start off some key principles of our advocacy. Obviously big or small. Should it be part of your regular activities just as you go about as an arts advocate or an arts administrator, ask yourself, how can I be trying to make sure that I am promoting the arts, it can be to your chamber of commerce. It can be just to the general public, and so always kind of ask yourself, how can I be promoting what I do? And that's something we do a lot, anyway, oftentimes being successful depends on a unified message. That's why we're kind of here today. That's why American for the Arts works with a coalition of national arts partners out there to come together with a message with an idea with the strategy so we could all be saying the same thing together at the same time, and that really makes a difference so always make sure you do that and at the same time, on state level many of you have a State arts organization who does the same thing, so be part of them, and be part of that message too. Nothing we need to be doing is expanding our advocacy efforts. This is okay. You're here. You're an advocate for the arts, and that's wonderful. But how about your family and your friends and the people you meet on the streets, invite them to be part of our advocacy work, to go sign up and be part of our 1 million person army? That's what we want to get to. We want to be that, you know, AARP or that club, with millions of people so when we speak on Capitol Hill it really does matter. Another thing we want you to do is get to know your elected officials and their staff, and this doesn't have to always be through the arts. I know my local officials through my HomeOwners Association, for example. They know what I do for a living, and they know I am passionate about the arts. So think about how you can authentically get to know your elected officials and develop that relationship because that really helps and that really matters because it's really hard to tell a friend, no then tell a stranger no, so get to know your elected officials, the politicians respond to voters. I'm sorry politicians respond to constituents, so you know a lead, you know, with your local stories. Tell how the arts matter locally to you, and then combine that with your local data points there, and this is all something that we have on our website to help you make that case. But stories and data together, and always keep it local because that's what no matter your elected officials, a federal, State or local person, they all care about local and then be your authentic self. So your passion will show we have lots of great stories. So just do that. Next slide please. You know we live in a polarized world, and so sometimes we have to be careful of how we go about advocating. So here's a couple of tips about that. It's about policy, not personality. So keep it about what the arts do and how they matter in the way that we conduct our lives, and in government, it is not partisan. It is local policies, impacting local constituents. Again, going back to that local area. The idea that the arts makes communities better is another thing that's strongly going to help with our work, whether you’re with or whoever you're advocating for, also remind our elected officials, the arts can help address other issues, say education, economic growth, youth suicide, etcetera. And it's more than just those arts, you know. Operas, ballets, theaters, so much more. Understand what a lot of the officials care about, and then incorporate that into our talking point. So if I know that an official really cares about our education system, we'll talk about arts and education. I probably won't talk about arts, and you know arts and healthcare. For example, So think about what they do a little research. Find out what your elected official really cares about and then you're gonna laugh about this one. But never ask an official to do something that will get them unelected. So don't go in and make an outrageous ask, they're not gonna take you seriously and they're not going to be able to do it. So, you know. Be rational and thoughtful about the asks that we make with them. Next slide, please. I was talking about those other issues. I just want to pause real briefly, to talk about our social impact explorer, this is 29 different authentic arts and categories. So housing, justice reform, transportation. So here's a great tool for you to learn about what the arts do, and a more broader sense with our community. And this will help you when you go to talk to your elected officials plus elected officials love this too. Next slide, please. So why should we, you know, be doing this? Why does it matter? Basically, if elected officials do not hear from us they're going to assume a couple of things, that everything is fine, no additional funding is needed or new policies are needed. And they're also going to say, you know, or they will also assume no one cares about the arts. They're going to be likely to cut their support for the arts. So we have to stand up. We have to be heard, and we have to make sure that they understand that we are voters, and we care about this. Keep in mind you're the experts. This is what you do for either your job. If you're an arts administrator or an artist, or even someone who loves the arts, you know, take the time to educate and inform these elected officials about what the arts do, because elected officials are generalists, they have to know a little bit about a lot of different things but you know if we can help educate them, it's gonna matter, and if we're not gonna do it, no one is going to do that. So make sure you do that, and then finally numbers matter again. Ask your friends, your family, the people on the street just sign up to be part of our 1 million person army to be able to make a difference. I just wanna show a little bit. You know, we talked about our stories and data, I just want to talk a little bit about our arts action fund. We all have state fact sheets about the arts and their economics in each state. This is important, because when you're talking to your elected officials, they really don't care about national numbers. They care about state or district or local numbers. So this is a great tool to find out about what's going on in your state, and so please go check out the fact sheet for your state. And these were just updated by our wonderful partners of the arts action fund. Next slide please. So let's talk a little bit about some goals and some rules for you, as you are going to be getting involved more and advocate, one of our goals is to build an ongoing professional relationship with these elected officials and their staff. If you wait until you need to ask them for something, you're too late. Let's work, and make sure that they understand what's going on, they understand who you are, what the issues are. They understand and support us. Then we make the ask, knowledge is power become a resource again, as I said, elected officials are generalists. So become that expert for them. So when they have a question about the arts and their creative economy, they'll call you up, and they'll say, Hey, tell me more about this, and then make sure you give them honest feedback. So make sure you help them with that. Never assume, you know what that elected official's position is. Ask them. That's sometimes the biggest issue that we see when we're advocating is we fail to say, do you support us? Do you support this policy proposal? So make sure you actually ask them what they – what they believe. And then, as I said earlier, you know, get to know their staff and stay in regular contact. It's great to know the elected official and develop that. But the staff are so important whether it's on the federal, State or local levels so good to know the staff. The staff are the people who give the elected officials their information. You know they're the people that often are the last people they talk to before they go to vote. So if you have the staff person in your corner, you're gonna be way, you know. Gonna be way ahead of things, next slide. Okay, so where do we start? So first start is, where do we get to know? Where do we identify our elected officials here? So, as you know, it's consistent based when dealing with elected officials, basically, the first levels, can you vote for them? Are you in their district? You do, you– have you lived there, secondly, maybe your organization has a footprint in their districts, or maybe you're just across the district line, but you have a lot of people coming from there, or, lastly, maybe your audience comes from their district. So the lower you can get to the constituent base the better. But sometimes all 3 of these will work for you. But don't bother or go asking someone across the country to vote or contact them, because you're not a constituent and they won't care. Okay. So let's go find out. I do this by going on our artsactionfund.org. And then you go ahead and click on the act button on the top. Next slide and hit the next button please, and then you're going to actually do that. We're going to find your legislators next, hit the next one, then, and then a popup box is going to show up asking you what your zip code is, pop in your zip code. Then hit the continue button. And you're gonna get this wonderful list of all your elected officials from the President on down to your State House in your State– State Senator. So let's just see what is in all this information here. So say, you wanna learn more about your federal elected officials. So in this case it's representative Maria Salazar from Miami. So you click on her. It’s gonna come up with some contact information. This is, you can see different things like her website or Facebook or Twitter. And then the most important thing hit the next one is, there's a district address there. This is where they're at locally, so you don't have to come to Washington, DC. You can stay local and go and set up meetings with them. So keep that in mind there next you can check out what their, what their committees are. So on the Federal level, those people that are really important to us sit on the committees of jurisdiction. So appropriators, for example. So you want to see their appropriator, or maybe they're a small business. So this helps you understand what you should be talking with them about. So again, if they're in the small business as the congresswoman is, you're gonna want to talk about the SBA in the arts, things along those lines. Continuing, we list their staff up there. And so you can see who their chief of staff is and different things like that. And see who their scheduler is. That's important to know who their scheduler is in that, because the scheduler, is the person, is going to help you be able to understand how to get in there. We will be able to see your art staffer if it's not on this screen here. The official can come on here and see who their art staffers are. So that is an important thing you can have a name to advocate with, next slide please. Lastly we have bills, and so there's not a whole lot because the Congress is just starting but you can see which bills they are cosponsoring or in different cases under the colleague letter which my colleagues later on will explain what that means, but we can see kind of what they are sponsoring and usually a better idea of what they are doing in their district there. Next slide please. So you know your elected officials are, how do we start? We have different ways to communicate to your elected officials and this kind of thing goes and increases levels of difficulty. You can send an email, we will talk about that a little bit. You can do it the old-fashioned way, write a U.S. Postal Service letter out or type anything, and then the most important thing with those two is personalize it, tell your story. That's what really matters to the elected officials telling the story. And then you can make a phone call and the numbers on the pages we just showed you can call it say I’m a constituent and I urge the senators to do XY and Z. Meet with them in their office whether the district office, the DC office, the state capital office, or in the back at your own organization. Host them at your organization so they can learn what their vote in DC equates to what happens locally, so you're making that great connection and there are a lot of different things that you can do to contact your elected official. Next slide. So he got emails, here is I will go back to the arts action website that I showed you about, next please, you can go back up to that app see the Arts Action Center, and then it's gonna bring you to a page that looks like this this is our current action and it's about the NEA funding, it makes it very easy notice is a little message box that's grayed out that is for you to tell your personal story in. Make sure you go and add your personal story in there. It does not have to be much but a little something that will help them show that hey this is a real person. And they have a real concern about the arts. The other messages are in there and you can customize them how you want it. We have all the data there and you scroll down and hit send and yeah it's done. It takes 2 to 3 minutes to do. Next slide. So you may want to arrange a meeting. This is really simple too. Call them up to form an email to say I am a constituent and I would like to come in and meet with you. Some federal elected officials have a web portal so you may have to go through that so pretty easy and automated, but the important is you state your constituent tell them the topic you want to talk about appropriations for the arts, arts and education and who is going to be attending, you and some friends etc. and when you go to schedule a meeting be flexible on the dates, times plan ahead 3, 4, 5, 6 weeks don't try to do it tomorrow. Be mindful of their legislative schedules. Sometimes there's very busy times and it will be hard to get a meeting and sometimes on the federal level they are here in DC and other times they are in their home offices and the district, so just make sure you know where they are at. For Denver state legislatures make sure that you know that some are part time and generally on average often times the best time to meet with the legislature might be in August when they are at home and not doing anything so lots of great opportunities for you to do that. Next slide please. So you have the meeting, now what do you do? Do your homework and be prepared. What are those top three issues you talk about? Keep it to two or three and not a whole bunch it will confuse them. So figure that out and have your talking points ready, if more than one person is there in the meeting, figure out a time, figure out who was going to talk about what and know what you are talking about. Be ready to explain your topics in a way that will resonate. So it combines with a personal story, don't talk about the data, data is important, but again that person's story of what the arts do for you and the community, etc. Bring some background material, some written background materials as a leave behind. This is a great way to extend the conversation and say I will send you some follow-up information and have the communication back and forth. That's a great way to do it and then lastly during the meeting, take a photo. Use social media, tag elected officials, thank them for their time. And then that will help you help them see you as a great asset to be able to help. Next slide please. And then lastly follow-up, put your elected officials on your organization's emailing list. Personally invite them to events, ask them to participate in some way so that you can ask them [indiscenrible] and ask them to be the ambassadors that come in or whatever the case is. Or the diplomat, arrange for them to come visit you and use your other facilities so again they are connecting what they do there, and attend town hall meetings if they have them. So there's lots of different ways that you can work with that. And with that, next slide, I have gone through all my stuff I always say you cannot spell the arts, you cannot spell bipartison without the arts and so it's a great way to affect what you believe in and also it makes a difference in this country so thank you very much and Nina I will check back over to you.

>> Jay before I let you go, that was a great presentation and I want to underscore a couple of things that you said really kind of bring it home. One is in doing the homework, visiting the member of Congress's website and reading what are the issues that they care about, what are they doing within the committees that they sit on, and signing up for the member of Congress newsletter as well. Because then you get regular contacts with them. Attend their town hall meeting and associate what we are doing on arts policy issues with their Congressional initiatives as well. And then you mentioned that some members of Congress can request an appointment with the member, either by going through their scheduler with the arts action fund email list of the action center, and then second you mentioned that there is a portal that they would need to go to. That is actually located as I understand on the member of Congress’s site. It's a place that you click to schedule an appointment is that right?

>> That's correct and they normally have a page that will say you do this electronically some of them even have a page says also you know send an email to scheduler@sen.whatever.gov type of things so just look at their website as you are doing your research that's great, and oftentimes they have an issue tab on the website you can see what their issues are and what they been doing. Also look at their social media, that's a great way to figure out what they are doing what they are up to.

>> That's a great one, and their social media handles were also listed on the Arts Action Centers description menu addresses and social handles on social media that they are using. Thank you Jay for a great presentation and as a reminder the slides are already available on our Arts Action Center’s website and we will get that URL again at the end. So we are going to move deep to policy issues that I mentioned, funding for NEA, funding for arts education, dept of education, tax policy issues, and other funding opportunities at other federal agencies other than the NEA and the Department of Education. And to help us through that section, we are going to ask Tooshar Swain the Director of Public Policy for the Americans for the Arts, and then Tara [indiscernible] is the Advocacy Manager at Americans for the Arts to walk us through the policy issues and the messaging and what the asks are. And I will hand it over to Tooshar first.

>> Thank you Nina. We're so happy that you're spending some valuable time with us today and joining us in our year-round advocacy for the arts, before we go into where we're going, if we should talk a little bit about where we've been. So the next slide please. And like. I said, we need to know you know what we accomplished, what we succeeded at, and also what we didn't accomplish. Because that's what we'll be working on for this year. We had big wins because of the work of arts advocates across the country in helping solidify a 15% increase to the National Endowment of the Arts and the National Endowment of the Humanities, bringing them both to an all-time budget high, of 207 million dollars included in that Appropriations Bill which passed and was signed into law at at the end of last year, there are equity and diversity grant making recommendations within the appropriations, report language. We're going to talk a little bit more about what report language means as opposed to a legislative fix or codified language. But for now I know that this is a huge step forward. The funding increase and the equity language are a Testament to the strong and persistent advocacy of the arts community. Next slide, please. I'm really excited about for the first time a first time ever budget allocation of 10 million dollars to the Department of Defense to support Creative Arts therapies at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence the intrepid centers are dedicated to improving the lives of patients and families, affected by traumatic brain injury through collaborative efforts with patients, families, and researchers. Similarly an additional 5 million dollars to the Department of Veterans Affairs was appropriated for its whole health initiative affairs was appropriated for its whole health within the VA is an approach to care that supports veterans. Health and wellbeing where a health team gets to know the veteran, and then establishes a personalized health plan based on their values, needs and goals. So that's an excellent place for this money to be located. And then more than 66 million dollars in direct project funding, also known as Congressional earmarks. These were awarded to 68 arts organizations, and again, earmarks are a way for individual members – members of Congress to request funding for a project for their constituent directly during the Budget Project, and I would encourage you to to watch a webinar that we did at the beginning of this month, which talks about the earmark process. And as that process is closed right now, it'll give you a head start going into next year, next slide please. Nina talked about the impact of arts education to the field, and the Every Student Succeeds Act which was passed in 2014 as the K through 12 Law of the Lands. In that bill it listed arts education as a well-rounded subject, that should be taught to all students K-12 and with this comes several well rounded funding streams that you can find in various programs throughout the every student succeeds act the first which many know about is a Title I part A. This is the financial assistance program to schools with high percentages of children from low-income families. This program received a 5% bump title 2, part A is the professional development block grant which can be used for all educators, including arts, educators, this had a slight bump from last year, and then the student support and academic enrichment grant, which is Title 4 block grant. These funds can be used for technology for safe and healthy initiatives within schools and a well-rounded education. So you can understand why it's important to arts education, and that program received a 1.5 percent increase from last year. And then finally the Department of Education's Assistance for Arts Education programs. This is a competitive grant program that teachers can apply for for professional development. Community partners can apply if they want to assist in arts, education in their communities, and of course the K-12 school itself. So. That was so. That was just a brief summary of what we accomplished last year. And again, just a great assortment of wins for us, and as we move to the as as we move to our advocacy, you know, for this year I think it's important in our advocacy to underscore the importance of the arts to local communities and across the country, through data and the arts and culture sector are a huge contributor to the economy, and we need to look no further than data released by the US Department, or excuse me, the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, which earlier this month unveiled some data that said that the arts and culture economy activity increased to 4.4% of gross domestic product topping the 1.02 trillion dollars in 2021 this is a new, high watermark, and represents a larger percentage of GDP than powerhouse sectors, such as transportation, construction and agriculture. So if you don't take anything else from my part of the presentation please leave today with your heads up high knowing that you’re working, advocating for a highly productive sector. Next slide, please. And so these next 2 slides are bills that did not pass last year. We’re hoping for more support this year. The next 2 pieces of legislation may be included within our advocacy in our next 30 days, but it's a wait and see on these as we're not exactly sure when they're going to be introduced. The first is the Performing Arts Tax Parity Act. The acronym is PATPA and this deals with the qualified performing artist provision that allows performers to deduct their artist related expenses as an adjustment to their income as well as to take the standard deduction. So this is a significant tax break. Assuming that you fulfill the requirements and therein lies the problem. You're adjusted, grace income needs to be less than $16,000 before deducting these expenses. This was created in 1986 , and has never been adjusted for inflation, and so PATPA does that by increasing that threshold to $100,000 for single filers, and then $200,000 for joint artists has a lot of support by groups as well as the communities across the country as you can see, there and we are going to look to you all to hopefully work with your members of Congress to try and pass this next year. I'm gonna pass it over to Tara who's been working on this piece of legislation.

>> Thank you, Tooshar! So, as Tooshar mentioned another bill that did not pass last year. But we are monitoring and asking advocates to encourage their members of Congress to support is the advancing equity through the Arts and Humanities Act of 2022. This bill was introduced by Congresswoman Barbara Lee in April of last year, and her office is tentatively looking to reintroduce the bill April this year, so next month is when they're looking to reintroduce this legislation, particularly because April does mark the fifth anniversary anniversary of California's arts, culture and creativity month, and essentially the bill works to address inequity in the arts and humanities, particularly by providing the national endowment for the arts funding to BIPOC led organizations. And again we're asking advocates to really encourage their members of Congress to help push this legislation forward, looking for that bipartisan support, to advance this legislation. Next slide.

>> Thanks, Tara! And then one thing I'll add about that is that where I spoke before about equity language in report language for an Appropriations Bill that is not binding language. So where we have the Equity Directive coming from Congress last year, that is not binding so the NEA doesn't necessarily have to do it. So you know, we've been talking to them, and we know that they are, and that they will, and that equity is highly important to them. But to pass the bill that Tara just talked about was actually codified into law. And so it wouldn't matter who was in power in the house, or who was in the Presidency. They would have to abide by it. So that's why some very important piece of legislation, the relevant committees for arts policy for our arts policy agenda are the House and Agenda are the House Senate Interior Appropriations subcommittees. Why are these important? They are important because they determine what the funding levels will be for the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities. The House and Senate labor and Labor, health and human services, education, appropriations subcommittee is highly important to us because they will determine well rounded funding for K-12 education at the Federal level. And again this includes arts, education, and then the tax committees on the House side are called the Ways and Means Committee. On the Senate side it is the Senate Finance Committee, and we had just talked about the Performing Arts Tax Parity Act. So that will be key for that piece of legislation as well as the charitable act which we will be talking about momentarily. And next slide. And I'm gonna pass it over to Tara to talk about the committees and how to orient yourself as you look at key committee members.

>> Thank you, Tooshar. So, looking specifically at committees, we first have the House Interior Appropriation Subcommittee, and just to reinforce what Tooshar mentioned out of this subcommittee we do have funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities. The member who serves as the committee chair for this respective subcommittee is Congressman Mike Simpson coming out of Idaho, and then the ranking member for the subcommittee, is Congresswoman Chellie Pingree. And then for our advocates we do have a link in the event you all would like to go on the respective subcommittees website and see the entire membership list. And again, we are asking advocates to see if your member of Congress happens to serve on this subcommittee and in turn ask them to support the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Arts increased funding specifically for those cultural agencies. Next slide, please. Next we have the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee and the 2 members who are in positions of leadership for this Subcommittee. Are Senator Jeff Markley from Oregon, and Senator Lisa Murkowski from Alaska. Again, we've provided the links to the subcommittee in the event advocates would like to see if their members of Congress happens to sit on the subcommittee. Next slide, please. We have the House, Labor, Health, Human Services and Education Appropriation Subcommittee, and the members who are in positions of leadership for this subcommittee, Congressman Robert Adderholt, from Alabama and Congresswoman Rosa Delauro. Next slide, please. We have the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services Education, Appropriation Subcommittee, with Senator Tammy Baldwin serving as the committee chair, and Senator Shelley Moore Capito, serving as the ranking member. We have the House Ways and Means Committee. This deals with tax legislation, with Congressman Smith and Congressman Neil. Next slide, please, we have the Senate Committee on Finance Leadership, again dealing with tax legislation with Senator Wyden and Senator Crapo.

>> Thanks, Tara, I– we have put in the we've put in the chat links to all of the committees, and you know, as Tara mentioned earlier, I think it's important for you to familiarize yourself with you know, with the members of the committee, and particularly if a Senator represents you, the state that you live in, and if a member of Congress represents, represents the district in which you live, very important to to be in touch with them and to reach out to them. Quickly as appropriations, is a huge issue, as it pertains to NEA, and any NEH funding as well as the defense and veterans funding that we talked about earlier, and arts education just a quick outline of the appropriations process. The President is required by law to submit a budget to Congress that typically happens in February or March. It has happened this year, I believe, on March ninth, and from there, as from there we go through where we are right now, which is the Congressional appropriations request season, because at this point in time staff and members from appropriations committees are looking and taking requests from other Congressional members. How do those other Congressional members get their requests? They get that from the Advocate or from the constituent, who is meeting with them. So that's why your engagement right now is critically important. From there, we'll be focusing a lot on the House side this year. Particularly with NEA and NEH funding for appropriations subcommittees, and Appropriations Committee markups, as well as floor votes that could potentially happen. And David talked about the ramifications of some of the new rules, and how that could potentially affect some of the policies that we're advocating for today and then if they get through if they get through votes they will eventually need to conference to come to an agreement on a similar bill that they pass, and then send over to the President that hasn't happened quite that way in several years, and we don't necessarily anticipate it happening again. But it does provide an outline of places where we can be helpful. And we can advocate and as an arts community to members of Congress. Next slide. And so, if we take that template, the President's budget for NEA and NEH funding was at 211 million dollars. It wasn't, as you know, it was– It was, you know, potentially a little bit underwhelming, though maybe not so bad considering this, the environment that we are in currently. But we're advocating for at least 211 million dollars. We've reached out to the overwhelming majority of Congressional offices asking for at least 211 million, and, as you can see, there, the rest is a TBD. But it can be much higher in funding with your support and your help. Next slide. And then just very quickly, we are looking to add to the work that we did last year with that 10 million dollars going to the Department of Defense’s Intrepid Centers, this time advocating for 22 million dollars to the Department of Defense's morale, welfare, and recreation for the support and expansion of community arts, programs and partnerships in all military services, understanding that the community components of creative arts therapies is so key and so helpful particularly in the military. Next slide. And as you can see here, there was no budget request. We are asking for 22 million dollars. That's where we're at right now. And TBD on committee markups as well as floor votes, next slide. And then to add on to what we did last year with the 5 million dollars for the VA full health initiative is a 10 million dollars ask to the Department of Veterans affairs to expand creative arts, therapists, positions, and talent pipeline for increasing support and educational training to expand our local community arts partnerships, veterans as well as their families caregivers and survivors. Again, this is a new program. So next slide, this would be a new program created. So there was not there was not anything that is in the present budget. But we are advocating for 10 million dollars, next slide. And then we talked about a well-rounded education. We are the President’s requests are to the left. You can see that arts advocates, or arts education advocates are advocating for level funding, for title 1 part A, slight increase for a title 2 part A, the same for title 4. And then for our assistance and arts education, which actually had level funding last year we are asking for a significant increase, at least relatively to 40 million dollars. Next slide. Then I believe finally, on the policy front, the charitable act which I talked about it’'s a tax bill. It was introduced earlier this month by Senators Laneford and Coons, among others. This legislation would make available to taxpayers who do not itemize on their tax return below the line deduction for a charitable giving on their Federal income taxes valued up to one third of the standard deductions which would be around $4,500 for an individual filer, and then $9,000 for a married joint filer, and we think that this is important for 2 reasons, one is that the art arts giving is pro cyclical meaning that in times of good charitable are good economic times, the arts performs better than than average, and then, during bad times it it can perform significantly worse than average, and so it's important to have that incentive there now also the tax cuts and jobs act of 2017 limits the amount of people who itemize now on their taxes, and so the deduction is highly important for non itemizers right now. So next slide, please. And I'm gonna hand it over to Tara to finish this off here.

>> Thank you Tooshar. So, moving forward into what advocates can do within the next 30 days to really help move a lot of these policy issues with one establishing relationships with both Democrat and Republican members of Congress as Nina had mentioned earlier we're asking our advocates to really develop those relationships, early on, so it is a matter of scheduling meetings with your members of Congress, making sure that you're being effective and following up and just creating a good rapport with members, so that when, legislation does come up that we need to move we can be effective in that. Also, we're asking prior to Congressional markups. You have your senators sign on to the Fy24 colleague letter for increased NEA and NEH funding the deadline, for that is actually the 31st of March, however, we've really been working here at Americans for the Arts to let our senators know that we would like for them to sign on. And we've also been asking advocates to help elevate that message by having you reach out to your respective senators to push that, next slide please. So again continuing on what advocates can do within the next 30 days. We are asking you to encourage your members of Congress to join the following Congressional caucuses. The first is going to be the Congressional Arts Caucus in the House, the Senate Cultural caucus in the Senate, the Congressional steam caucus, and the Congressional Humanities caucus next slide, please. And then lastly to reinforce some of what was discussed earlier, we are asking that you have your members of Congress sign on for NEA and NEH funding increased funding, any arts education funding, DOD and VA funding for community engagement and creative arts, therapies, and also have them serve as co-sponsors for the charitable act next slide, please.

>> Thank you, Tara, and thank you Tooshar. So we have given you a lot of policy information so far, and we're going to have a Q&A section to kind of break things down a little bit further after we hear from our final two speakers. We want to have you hear from grassroots constituents just like yourself about what their experience has been like in engaging with their members of Congress. We're going to first hear from Josh Stavros, who's the assistant professor in Associate Director of Arts Administration at Southern Utah University. Who's gonna–who was just here in Washington meeting with members of Congress and bringing a delegation of his students. And what that experience was like, and to kind of demystify what the process is like, and then afterwards we're gonna have someone who gets very involved with their members of Congress back home in their district. So 2 examples. And so, Josh, welcome, and we’d love to hear your stories now.

>> Thank you. Yeah, I just did the math. This is my 8th year of doing visits 2 years virtual 6 years in person, and it was so validating to see everything on the slides up so far, because so much of what I have experienced that has been positive come straight out of you know all of the things that Jay said at the beginning and really just the application of those things. So a lot of what I'm gonna say might even be a little bit of a repeat. But it's only to validate what has been my experience as quickly as just less than a week ago, in some offices. So first things first make sure you do that research. I can't say enough that knowing the committee assignments of the member of Congress that you're visiting is critical because you could talk about a lot of things. You may have a deep interest in the arts, and have a lot of policy areas that you think could be effective. But knowing exactly what their committees are, and what the things that they're focusing on is going to really help you hone in and develop a strong message, because you want to go into those meetings. The ones that we've had, whether with students or other constituents that have been the most successful, have had a purpose to the meeting. We're going in to talk about a specific bill. We're going to talk about a specific appropriation request. We're going to talk about a specific issue. That may be affecting things back home. But knowing that we're not just going in to have a general conversation, to talk broadly about art support, because while that's not unimportant, it isn't critical to the meeting itself, and the more successful meeting, you're more likely you are to have a successful meeting is the more specificity you have. So taking any number of the things that Tara and Tooshar just showed us, or the things that Jay talked about, I use the social or the arts impact wheel, I use that all the time, whether with students or other constituents to say, hey? What do we care about or looking at the list of committee assignments? What are some ways that we can connect, what we know, that the things that these legislators care about, so making sure that those meetings are tailored to those specific committee assignments or their PET projects and interests, and then talking specifically about that. I will say something that took me a little while to learn that, I think may feel counterintuitive is I don't want to step on anything, Rick's gonna say but staff are the key to everything, and a staff meeting is just as valuable in some ways, policy, wise, maybe even more so than a sit down with the representative or the Senator. What we started to do, and trying to ask for is, we try to ask for a meeting with the appropriate staffers. So checking with the scheduler or and or checking with that great Americans for the Arts website that says, who's the who's got the policy area, or who's you know, finding out when you submit that first email, who should we meet with? And make sure that you know who that is, and then say in the meeting like, look if the Congress person or the Senator can be in on the meeting for a little bit, that's fine, but that's not critical. Even just a picture at the end, because then that gives you time to talk policy and talk specifics, and you get the benefit of the political handshake and the photo at the end. And I've had 2 different staffers in 2 different offices tell me that that's actually one of the ways that they can tell whether they see you as a real lobbyist or just a constituent advocate, that they can tell that you're serious about what you're talking about is if you don't demand a time with the person because the staff controls that person's time. They control the way that and they guide the way, you know. Jay said it. You have to be a generalist. So being able to connect with the specific staffer and give them the information that that they need from you, the expert is critical, and it helps sort of break down other barriers, knowing that you want the meeting with them and you're happy to visit with the Congress person or the Senator, if you can. The other thing that was hard for me initially is, is understanding the context of your visits. You are one of any large number of constituent groups or specialist groups that will be visiting with those staffers and those congresspeople on any given day, and it may be exciting for you, the first time I went I felt it in my throat. I take students every year, and they're terrified and excited. It's one of the more exciting days of your life. It's just another meeting for your congresspeople or for their staff, and that's not a bad thing, but knowing where you fit so that you can be memorable, are the thing that I like to say is you are important in what you do, and I can't overstate that you what you're doing is important. But you're not special, because other people are doing this as well, and you want to make sure that they know that you know where you fit. In the broad picture of any number of policy portfolio issues, helping them see that helps you move forward without having to waste a lot of time. You know Jay already said it. Follow up afterwards, follow up with an email. I just last week was visiting with someone in Senator Romney's office, and we talked about a number of things that Tooshar mentioned, things that they hadn't heard of yet, so they were excited we sent a follow-up emails and then included those the research and white papers so that they have the information and they don't have to get it all in a 10 or 15 minute meeting. Sometimes the meetings are short, sometimes they’re 10 or 15 minutes, sometimes they're less. We had one meeting this week with a representative’s chief of staff in the hallway, because their office was so busy with appropriation season that there was nowhere for us to meet in the office, and so she pulled us out in the hallway and chatted for 5-10 min that isn't necessarily a

sign of disrespect. That's just a fact of life, and being able to accept those kinds of things will help you in in your visits, in your meetings with them. And then I you know I already said it, and don't wanna step on anything Rick's gonna say, but build those relationships close to staffers over time. Know who you're talking to, and what they're working on, know what else they've got going on and where it fits within their world. I can't speak enough about the importance of that. And how over time the meeting that you have if you're going to DC or you're visiting on Zoom, should you have the context of other past meetings or conversations or other emails. You know that email plan is so the email template builder is so good. One of the things the staffer said to me once is, we don't mind getting those we especially love to see when they're coming from personal email addresses. So even if you're copying and pasting stuff over so that you can share that information, I cannot over-emphasize in my last few minutes that the arts really are bipartisan. Utah in particular, has a all Republican Congressional delegation, and we are known for being a very conservative State, the arts culture support in our State are phenomenal, and we have representatives who have seen demonstrated using the tools that have been mentioned already today over time that the investment in arts and culture is worth it, and that in spite despite other challenges, cultural possibilities, there are a number of Republicans and Democrats who are strongly in favor of the arts, and one and knowing what to say is understanding who they are and how to talk to them. So I talked to Senator Romney about very different things than I would talk to Chris Stewart or Blake Moore, who also happens to be from our State, or knowing Mike Lee's politics I talked to him very differently, but there's always something to talk about and there's always something to connect to. And that's what makes all the meetings so successful. So that visit matters. What you're doing is important. Sometimes you might be the only person that they hear from. If you don't talk to them, nobody else might, and especially from the district. So, knowing that you are a constituent, that you care, and that you're reaching out to connect with them, and visiting with the staff about policy, and thanking the Congressperson, or getting a small bit of facetime with them…those are the things that will make a big difference and have made a big difference for me and other advocates. And again, learning this from Jay and the good people at the Utah Cultural Alliance has made a world of difference for us. So that's all I have. I'm happy to help answer questions later. But that's all I've got so far, so thanks for the opportunity, and I hope to see people in DC. Yeah.

>> Josh, sharing your experience is invaluable. Could you just take another 30 seconds to talk about what the uniqueness is and value of doing a Zoom Meeting? If you can't come to Washington.

>> Yes, I mean the thing the other thing that I didn't say is that every time I'm in an office or on zoom, I ask the staffer what's something they wish that their constituents or the Congressperson or Senator back home knew about? And they say we want to hear from you that they are waiting to hear on whether it's on key issues or just as constituent information. So you know the nature of a visit is such that a Zoom Meeting is good because it has many of the benefits of face to face. But you don't have to go in and you know you don't have to make your way to DC. Or wait for someone to come to your district, and being able to connect face to face, even if it's remotely with that staff person and understand who they are and what their job is with your representative is critical. And I think you know, like, I say, sending emails is good, you know Jay did a great job of putting the list of importance there, I can't overestimate how much happens face to face, and how much person to person interaction, matters and the less anonymous it is the better, and so, if you can’t afford or can't get to DC, that's okay. Send an email, be kind, be thoughtful, be civil, even if you have something you are concerned about. You're also dealing with a bunch of twenty-something people who are just trying to get through their work day. And while politics can be emotional, you want to be professional and engage with these people because you want something from them, and they need something from you, which is information. And the beautiful part. I think of advocacy, whether it's online or in person, is that it's where the inspirational meets the real, and you could talk about a lot of different things. You could want millions and you know, you could want a billion dollars for the arts but it's not gonna happen. So who do you talk to to get what you can? And how do you connect with them? And whether you're like me? Yes, don't– don't be afraid of meeting via zoom, it's the next best thing to being in person, and the more personal connection you can create with those staff and that Congressperson, the better off you will be as you continue to visit with them.

>> Thank you, Josh. Very valuable information. Okay. So now I'm gonna bring on our next speaker. Who is Rick Stein, who is the President, CEO of the local arts agency in Orange County, California, called Arts Orange County. Very seasoned advocate in the arts, and he's going to share some examples of how he does it back in the district at home. Rick?

>> Thank you so much, Nina, and pleased to be with you today from the land of the [indscernible] nation, and band of a mission Indians and the [indiscernible] people who are the original artists and artisans in our community. And still very active as well. So you know, the presentation today has really been great, and the points that Jay made were terrific and Tooshar and Tara, you know, getting really into all of that great detail. So I kind of feel that that was all the play by play commentary, and that I'm here for the color commentary, to use a sports metaphor, and I hope it'll be a little bit fun. So let's go to the first slide. So this is just a brief overview of who we are with the Arts Council County-wide for Art, for Orange County, California, we're in our 28th year. We have lots of traditional arts, council programs and services, but advocacy is really at the top of our list for how we contribute to our community. Next slide, please. Engaging with members of Congress one of the things that we began doing about 10 years ago at the invitation of a member of Congress, was to work with her. That was Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, in her Commissioned Art Competition. She was actually disturbed, that you know although the winner of each district around the nation gets a free couple of round-trip tickets on Southwest to fly for the reception in the US Capitol, that no other costs were covered, and so we worked with her, and a local donor to put some prize money together for the top winner, as well as for runners up, and that really bonded us to her, and since then we've had we have 7 congressional districts here 2 that are only slightly in Orange County, and the other 5 we work with directly every year on their Congressional art competition. We promote it. We do this email blast. You can see the winner from the prior year and links and deadlines for each district. And then we go to the receptions, and we're invited to present the prize money to the winners and pose for photos with the winners and the members of Congress. This really bonded us to these members of Congress in a way that is priceless. Next slide. So remember that Zoom is your friend, as has been just talked about, as you can see in that left hand slide. We're with Congresswoman Katie Porter, a group of arts leaders. We gather together, and you know there is strength and numbers, and if you can put a delegation like this together, to have such a conversation, you have a better chance of getting a meeting with your member of Congress, don't be disappointed, though if you only get 15 min, of their time, they're hopping from meeting to meeting, but they do wanna usually meet everyone on there and then it's a great opportunity to take a screenshot like this of everybody at the meeting and share it on your social media, which they also do. And also remember that the elected staff members are your friends, and we just had a lecture by NEA chair Maria Rosario Jackson here, in which of course, all the electors were in DC. They were working. It was on a weekday in the middle of the week, so their district coordinators attended to represent them, and it was a great opportunity to ensure that they were represented at the meeting at the lecture at the event, and we actually called them out in our introductions we mentioned that there were representatives of those members of Congress. Next slide, please. So this is just standard operating procedure, you should be inviting elected officials to all of your events. And you know, here we have a picture of the mayors of three largest cities in Orange County, Anaheim, Irvine, and Santa Ana, with a couple of arts and education Deans from UC Irvine at the lecture, also you should recognize your electors if you have an awards program at all. It's a great opportunity with the pandemic relief funds that our county Board of Supervisors made available. You know, we decided we really needed to honor them. And so 2 of them appeared in person. One sent a staff member and guess what we didn't forget about the ones who couldn't come to the event. We went to their offices to do photo ops there with them, and have a chance to shake hands and thank them for their support. And remember, these members of Congress have, you know, a printing press in their office where they print off all of these certificates to honor people in their district and honor organizations. It's another great opportunity to connect with them, so keep them informed of the accomplishments of your organization, because they'll look for those opportunities to get in front of a camera with you at any time they can, believe me. Next slide, please. So another great opportunity to connect with elected officials is when you have an artist of note or an arts dignitary coming to town, we had the California Arts Council Executive Director John Musconi visiting for the lecture so we he was here a day before we made an appointment with the chair of the Board of Supervisors to introduce them to Chair Wagner. He brought all his colleagues in, and we thought we were just gonna do a 5 minute photo op. But then they sat down with us for an hour to talk about why the arts are important in their lives and the lives of our community. So you never know what can happen in that regard too, and of course request a proclamation we're often suggesting that for arts, culture, and creativity, month. But in our case the California Arts Council requires each county arts agency to get a resolution of their County Board of Supervisors to confer official status as a state local partner. So if you are in the Arts Council business, that's something that is also an opportunity to connect on an annual basis with your Board of Supervisors. Okay, next, slide. So this is a big thing for me. Don't just talk the talk, walk the walk you are as a private citizen, able to support arts friendly candidates. Now just don't do it on your nonprofit organization company time, or use your work, computer phone or letterhead or finances to do that. That is a no-no. But when you attend fundraising events for candidates and elected officials, you never know what you'll learn about them, Mike Levin's mother was the first female toy designer at Mattel, and you never know who you'll meet I happened to attend somebody's, some candidate’s fundraiser and I met the Assembly Speaker there and had a great conversation, and he has proven to become a very pivotal figure in advancing the Arts agenda in California, and he gave me his personal contact information. He responds whenever I reach out to him and remember another thing, we are looking for long term relationships with these people. Think of them as your individual donors, you know as you would, because your School Board member or city council member might in 2 years run for County Board of Supervisors for State Assembly, or for Congress, these people move up the ranks, and they will remember you and have established a relationship with them. They'll look at you like Katie Porter did when I was in the Oakland Airport recently, I was about to board a plane and I hear my name and Congresswoman Porter is boarding the same plane and says Rick what are you doing here so you know these are long-term relationships that will, you know, pay off, you know, just very generously to our field, and remember they’re people too. It is. It is a person to person business, and just this last slide, if we can move to it, is during the pandemic. Our advocacy efforts resulted in over 85 million dollars in relief funding to our community in Orange County. And yes, that includes, you know, the shuttered venue operating grants, which were a huge part of that, but also all of the different PPP and grant programs that were available. And we were even contracted by the county to manage over 2 million dollars worth of grant making from their pandemic relief. So let me just see if I have anything else. Remember, it should be fun. It's not a burden. It's not a task. You're getting to know other people, and, believe me, ask them first what they know about the arts. Did they ever play a musical instrument? Did they, you know, take lessons in painting, you know, do they write some poetry? You would be surprised at how many elected officials have deep personal involvement in the arts, either themselves or their families, that motivate their support for many of the things that we are asking them to do. So I think I'll stop there.

>> Thank you so much, Rick. You are an amazing advocate, and I hope we can replicate your type of experts across the country. There is a Congressional art competition led in every member of Congress's office on the outside. So you can engage with your members that way, too. So I'm now gonna ask a couple of our other speakers to join us for a short time because the contents have been so rich here today. So Jay and Tooshar, if you could also join Josh and Rick with me to go over at least some of them and what I can promise is we will take down these questions and get back to you. So in case we are not able to address them all, a few of the questions that are more general that can affect everyone are in our advocacy efforts, how do we balance the intrinsic value of the arts, for art's sake, with a demonstrated social and economic impact of the arts. And I think going to Rick, who's right there on the ground at the local level to first take on an answer for that.

>> My biggest answer is to know your audience. And so when, you know I'm referring this back to the relationship building with our elected officials, know what is important to them, cause some of them the economic impact of the arts and providing that you know arts and culture arts and economic prosperity data, or in California, we have the Otis report on the creative economy that data is is important to some people, but you'd be surprised. Some of them elected, who seem to be so fiscally oriented, are also the ones who want that social impact. They will tell you the arts save lives. I have seen it in my district, and this is why the arts are important. So. Yes, we have all of these talking points, and all you know, the whole wheel of different ways, that the arts are important to our communities, to our lives. But you know that upfront research, knowing what is important to the person you're meeting with, will ensure that you touch upon the right points that connect with them.

>> That's terrific. And I recently spoke to the chair of the House Interior Appropriations Committee. Republican, Mike Simpson from Idaho. I asked him the same question almost, and what he said is, I need our constituents to come in and tell me how the arts improve our communities bottom line and talk about how the arts are doing great things in your community. Another question that came up that I'm gonna send to Josh. And I'm gonna give a little answer to it, too. Is, can I get any ID or other identifiers to show that I'm an arts advocate? And I notice Josh on your wall to your right, behind your shoulder, are a couple of indicators that you use, that you probably carry around with you. What are they saying? They're from the Arts Action Fund, by the way, which you can get.

>> Yeah. So I was gonna say, I kept that there. I'm keeping them on purpose. I have more buttons farther over if you look at my messy desk, I've got even more. But yeah, but whether it's a state or local organization, or Americans for the Arts, there are a number of little swag items or things that you can create that help identify you so I've got the arts actions fund arts, advocate and I vote we've got the museums, yes, and arts advocate, and then below that is something fairly specific to Utah. The Utah Culture Alliance runs a website called Now Playing Utah. That's an aggregator for all arts and culture events in the State, which is one of the things we'd like to talk about with our elected officials, that whether there are visitors or people coming, there's a way to see what's going on, and if you want to I mean if you have something like that in your own area, showing the sheer number, the volume of events, whether they're live or remote, or educational or museum exhibitions, just seeing how much is going on, can help give a sense of the impact and believe it or not. I think, internally at least, we actually divide things by Congressional districts, so that we can use this tool. Not at that. It's not just the whole state, or a county or a zip code. We can look at Congressional districts and say, here's everything going on in your district, which is a big thing, especially for members of the House of Representatives.

>> Yeah.

>> They're so focused on their districts.

>> And if you go to the Arts Action Fund site and you go to the Arts vote section you, you can grab this backdrop that I have for free and put it on any zoom call that you do with your member of Congress or anything else, we have badges. Social media badges on there and then there's a section that you can purchase very cheaply lots of swag about being an arts advocate, so encourage you to do that as well, and then for Tooshare and Jay, for the last question is, I'd like to do a wrap up of what to do in the next 30 days. And I'm gonna throw a list that I've compiled based on what I heard today. And I'd love to see if I caught enough if there's anything you wanna add. First is, learn about your member of Congress. Go to their website, go to their social media sites to figure out what's important to them. What committees are they on? And are those committees key to things that we're concerned about? But even if they don't sit on a committee, we still want to talk to them because of floor vote issues about our NEA issues and arts, education issues. So their vote matters then. But if they’re an influencer on our topic, look at those committees.

>> If I could put it, if I could just say one thing in there, even though they don't sit on the committee. Maybe their best friend who's a Senator, does sit on that committee, too, and so you say, “Hey, can you talk to Senator X on our behalf?” And so that's a good point, too.

>> Yeah, and then both Tooshar and Jay talked about, we want you to email like, get started by just going to our action center after you've identified your members of Congress to actually go ahead and start with sending an email about getting the NEA increased based on the presence request of 211. Then there are some bills that are coming up to be co-sponsored. We're going to be adding those action items very soon to our site, because they just recently got added, like the charitable act. But coming very soon is Performing Arts Tax Parity Act, and the advancing equity through the Arts Act with Barbara Lee that we're going to be giving you opportunities on that action center to co-sign. Is there and then Tara had brought up we want you to sign dear colleague letters. I'd like to offer. There's the resource center that we will put up in the next hour. So we will post that dear colleague's letter for the Senate, and who has already signed, and if they're not, name is not on the list. That means your Senator has not signed yet and would be a great target for you to go to. That question came up in the chat. Tooshar, do you wanna conclude with anything before we just give our final thanks?

>> No, I think that's important. We will have that up, and then I think the final thing is, you know, not to be buried underneath all of the policy is at the end. We talked about it the Congressional Arts caucus, the Congressional Steam caucus, the Senate Cultural caucus. These are all important things to get your members onto, and so that simple ask if you're not, you know, interested in delving into the policy is equally as important.

>> Yeah and to find that information two things are gonna happen momentarily, we're gonna post our Congressional Arts report card from last year that shows, were they a member of the arts caucus? Were they members of the humanities caucus? Were they a member of the Steam caucus? Did they co-sign these dear colleague letters? Did they co-sponsor a bill, but it, since you have freshman members that got elected in 2022, you can assume the answer is, no on all of those, because they were not in Congress, so you would meet as a freshman member you will want them to join all of those things, and you'll go through the Congressional Arts report card that we put out last year. That will have details for those who are incumbents that came back into Congress. So with this, I'd like to just go to our final slide and give everyone the URL where you're gonna find all of this content, including eventually the video for today's webinar, probably by the end of the week. So please take down this website because everything is online right now, so you don't have to wait to see our Powerpoint slides, you don't have to wait to find how your legislators are and how they voted in the past. The State arts fact sheets link to the explorer and then, like I said, in a couple of days, the video for today's broadcast. I'd like to thank all of our speakers. I'd like to thank our ASL interpreter who had to do this all by yourself today. Normally she has a helper, and we are very grateful to you, and I'd like to close out by thanking all of you in in today's webinar for being part of a growing art advocacy movement, and I hope one of the last things that you'll do is try to recruit more members to our cause. It's free to join at the Arts Action Funds website. Thank you and have a great day everyone.