

**Date:** October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025

**To:** Ann Arbor City Council

**From:** Ann Arbor Public Art Commission

**Subject:** Recommendation in Opposition to State Arts and Culture Funding Cuts

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State and Local Leaders, on behalf of Ann Arbor's Public Art Commission, we urge you to review the facts regarding the proposed, devastating spending cuts to Arts and Culture funding for the State of Michigan and importantly to our local community.

The city of Ann Arbor's Public Art Commission is an arts advisory body to the City Council, tasked with overseeing the \$2 million collection of taxpayer-funded public art in Ann Arbor. We feel compelled to speak up when such an anti-business, anti-family public policy is proposed.

There is a culture war in Lansing, and Ann Arbor's embrace of art and culture has put it on a list of cities that are becoming the frontline in that war. The Republican majority in the Michigan House of Representatives has presented a budget that eliminates all state funding for arts and culture, [totaling \\$12.3 million](#). These local grants support an [\\$18.4 billion Michigan industry](#) that employs over 120,000 people. Investing in this sector directly supports and grows these jobs, providing stability for thousands of families. Elimination of state funding also puts an additional \$1 million in federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts at risk. The University Musical Society in Ann Arbor has warned that these cuts would ["decimate Michigan's creative sector"](#).

Ann Arbor's embrace of art and culture has also put it on another list. This is a list of cities whose creative culture attracts and retains skilled workers, students, and entrepreneurs who are looking for an exciting place to live, work, and play. [The arts teach critical thinking, innovation, and communication skills](#). These skills are essential not just for artists but also for entrepreneurs and businesses in the global marketplace.

It makes common sense to use public art to beautify a public landscape, but it also makes dollar-cents because it attracts tourism and drives revenue for local businesses. [Art is a catalyst that can revitalize communities](#). Investments in cultural districts and public art can improve neighborhood aesthetics and increase property values, strengthening the tax base.

A 2023 survey found that Washtenaw County's nonprofit arts and culture sector in 2022 generated nearly [\\$100 million in economic activity](#), supported over [1,500 local jobs, generated \\$2.786 million in local tax dollars, and attracted 2.5 million annual attendees](#). Art makes cents!

Support for arts and culture is not partisan. [Neighborhoods with higher arts participation report lower rates of juvenile delinquency and serious crime](#). The arts help build community trust and create more desirable, vibrant places to live. State funding for the Michigan Arts and Culture Council (MACC) supports grassroots, community-level programs selected by local leaders. This aligns with a philosophy of empowering local communities to address their own needs.

[Arts funding is also key for diversifying Michigan's economy](#), attracting skilled workers, and reducing reliance on traditional industries. Arts programs improve communities, provide educational opportunities that benefit children and families, and give a voice to communities that are traditionally marginalized. These should be core values for both Republicans and Democrats.

We urge you to stand up for this critical support to continue funding arts and culture in the State of Michigan.