



Testimony in Support of H.B. 6119 – An Act Concerning Arts, Culture and Tourism Funding

Patrick McMahon, CEO
Connecticut Main Street Center

Joint Committee on Commerce
February 11, 2021

Dear Senator Hartley, Representative Simmons, Senator Martin, Representative Buckbee and distinguished members of the Commerce Committee:

I write on behalf of the Connecticut Main Street Center, Inc. (CMSC) in support of H.B. 6119. CMSC is a state-wide nonprofit working to unleash the economic potential of Connecticut's downtowns.

Arts, culture and tourism are economic drivers for our downtowns and Main Streets across the state. According to the Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 study, conducted by Americans for the Arts and released in 2017, Connecticut's nonprofit arts and culture industry generates \$797.3 million in annual economic activity in the state, supporting over 23,000 full-time equivalent jobs and generating \$72.3 million in local and state government revenues. A study conducted by Tourism Economics and released in 2019 showed that tourism contributes \$15.5 billion to Connecticut's economy, including 123,521 jobs representing 5.3% of all jobs in the state, \$960 million in state and local taxes in 2017, and visitor spending of \$9.3 billion.

In addition to the immense economic benefits generated by these sectors, arts, culture and tourism create a sense of place that adds to the quality of life in Connecticut and our communities. Our lives are all enriched by the historic theaters like the Bushnell, Warner, Garde Arts, Palace, Goodspeed and several more. These venues are anchors to our historic downtowns. In addition to these large venues, we have smaller live music venues, historic house museums, kids museums, and arts centers like the Wadsworth and Bruce Museum that entertain, teach and inspire our residents and visitors alike.

Increasing the percentage of the hotel and lodging tax that supports the Tourism Fund from 10 to 25% will help prevent further economic injury caused by the pandemic, address the impact of the shutdown, and accelerate recovery of not only these important sectors, but all of Connecticut.

Thank you for your consideration of this measure. Please contact me at 860-985-2083 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. McMahon, CEO