

VSA Affiliate Action Packet on the Presidential Budget Proposal

Take Action

Contact your U.S. representatives' and senators' offices and ask to speak with the education aide in the office who handles education appropriations matters. Find members' contact information, including phone and fax numbers on the [Senate](#) and [House of Representatives](#) lists below, by visiting www.house.gov or www.senate.gov, or by calling the U.S. Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and asking for your U.S. representative or senator.

If you have the education aide's e-mail address from a prior correspondence please use that. If you do not have the e-mail address, please call the member's office. Identify yourself as a constituent and ask to speak with the education aide or for the individual's e-mail address. Do not leave a message at the front desk if possible.

Suggested Language to Share with Your Networks

- While President Obama's FY 2011 budget proposal provides a generous overall increase in funding for the Department of Education, it combines funding for Arts in Education (where VSA receives its funding) with seven other small categorical programs into a state-based competitive block grant entitled "Effective Teaching and Learning for a Well Rounded Education." The direct grant to VSA would be eliminated if this proposal is adopted, providing no assurance that the needs of individuals with disabilities will be addressed in this effort to provide a "well-rounded education."
- If the White House budget proposal for the U.S. Department of Education is enacted, students, families, teachers, and teaching artists would be hurt by the loss of program funding for VSA that provides the only federal support for arts in education to students with disabilities.
- At stake is all federal funding for arts education. The grant to VSA directly supports in this state and all 50 states:
 - A reliable infrastructure of arts services for people with disabilities, their families, teachers, and friends.
 - The development of effective instructional strategies using the arts that makes learning inclusive.
 - Effective professional development programs for educators on how to incorporate arts based instructional practices that enhance learning in the classroom.
 - A professional community for arts educators, special educators, and non-profit leaders dedicated to making the arts accessible to all learners.

- All of these vital services, and the expansion of these services through funding leveraged by state and local agencies, would be lost if funds for VSA are eliminated.
- We must not abandon our nation's path towards equality in our education system in favor of a system in which funding is allocated on the basis of winners and losers. Education is neither a business nor a sport. It's a fundamental right of every child, including children with disabilities.
- Please continue support for arts education, particularly for students with disabilities, by supporting \$53 million in funding for the FY11 Arts in Education program at the Department of Education, including the grant for VSA.

Notes from the Teleconference Call

- The fiscal year the budget refers to begins in July of 2011. However, the time to reach out is right now.
- This proposed block grant approach (a block grant is a large sum of federal money given to a regional government with only general provisions as to the way it is to be spent) provides no mechanism to ensure it is distributed equitably around the country. They are competitive not only within our states, but also between states.
- The two houses of Congress have equal weight, so contact both your senators and representatives. For House members, you can reach out to all in your state because you are a statewide organization. If you have board, staff, or stakeholders in districts other than your own, ask them to reach out to their representative also because it will mean more coming from a constituent.
- You can come up with more effective talking points than VSA can give you. Your stories, your location, and your population mean more to your members of Congress.
- Send language to as many people within your state as you can. For instance, VSA Utah sent a letter to their own mailing list, that of the Utah Cultural Alliance, and the state museum association. Think beyond your own address book.
- Arts Advocacy Day is coming up. If you are not able to go yourself, get in touch with people going from your state, and make sure they bring up VSA on their visits. If you do not know anyone going from your state, find your [state captain](#), who coordinates visits to your state's delegation on Capitol Hill.
- E-mail [Katherine Copeland](#) to let the home office know about meetings or calls you have with your members of Congress, letters that get a great response, or any questions you might have.

Senate Appropriations Committee

Website: <http://appropriations.senate.gov/>

Majority Office:

S-128 Capitol
Washington, DC 20510-6025
Phone: (202) 224-7363

Minority Office:

S-146A Capitol
Phone: (202) 224-7257

Majority (18)

No Floridians on this committee

Minority (12)

Senate Appropriations Committee

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Website: <http://appropriations.senate.gov/>

Majority Office:

SD-131
Washington, DC 20510-6034
Phone: (202) 224-9145

Minority Office:

SD-156
Phone: (202) 224-7230

Majority (9)

No Floridians on this committee

Minority (5)

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee

Website: <http://help.senate.gov/>

Majority Office:

SD-428
Washington, DC 20510-6300
Phone: (202) 224-0767
Fax: (202) 224-5128

Minority Office:

SH-835
Phone: (202) 224-6770
Fax: (202) 224-6510

Majority (13)

No Floridians on this committee

Minority (10)

House Education and Labor Committee

Website: <http://edlabor.house.gov/>

Majority Office:

2181 RHOB
Washington, DC 20515-6100
Phone: (202) 225-3725
Fax: (202) 226-5398

Minority Office:

2101 RHOB
Phone: (202) 225-4527
Fax: (202) 226-9552

Majority (30)

No Floridians on this committee

Minority (19)

House Appropriations Committee

Website: <http://appropriations.house.gov>

Majority Office:

H-218 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515-6015
Phone: (202) 225-2771

Minority Office:

1016 LHOB
Phone: (202) 225-3481
Fax: (202) 225-9476

Majority (37)

Minority (23)

C. W. Bill Young, FL

Debbie Wasserman Schultz, FL

Ander Crenshaw, FL

**House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related
Agencies**

Website: <http://appropriations.house.gov>

Majority Office:

2358 RHOB
Washington, DC 20515-6015
Phone: (202) 225-3508

Minority Office:

1016 LHOB
Phone: (202) 225-3481
Fax: (202) 225-9476

Majority (11)

Minority (6)

No Floridians on this committee

