

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- October 10, 2014

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Arts and Arts Education Advocacy Leaders Unite in a Call for State Investment in the Arts

Atlanta, Ga. – ArtsGeorgia, C4 Atlanta, the Georgia Alliance for Arts Education, the Georgia Association of Museums & Galleries, joined by Georgia’s arts and arts education advocacy leaders, have jointly drafted a declaration in support of Georgia investing in the arts and arts education for fiscal year 2016. They are calling on Georgia's artists, arts organizations and arts educators to join them in support of this unified appeal to the Governor and state legislators to include an investment in the arts and arts education in the next state budget. The joint declaration states:

“CALL FOR A RENEWED INVESTMENT IN THE ARTS

The arts budget in Georgia was severely cut due to the recession from a high of \$4.5 Million Dollars to its current level of just over \$500,000, a yearly loss of over \$4 Million Dollars. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the available programs and services that Georgia’s arts agency is able to deliver to the arts industry in support of arts programming across the state. The current state arts agency budget profoundly limits the grants program, leaving some of Georgia's most valuable arts organizations without well-deserved and much-needed support. Total grant funding was reduced again for the current fiscal year. These multiyear cuts have resulted in Georgia being ranked last in the country in per capita state arts spending. It has contributed to Georgia being ranked near last in arts education. The current reduced arts budget has adversely affected an industry that employs more than 200,000 Georgians. As a direct consequence, many of the community-based and fine arts organizations, large and small, throughout the state, are struggling to continue serving their audiences and their communities. Arts in school and arts in after school programs have been cut or have ceased to exist in many school districts.

We call on Georgia’s Governor and the General Assembly to increase arts spending in the state budget for FY2016 by \$4 Million Dollars as a renewed investment in arts and arts education both are a jobs sector with a major impact on employment and on economic impact for Georgia.”

Information on the economic impact of the arts, the number of jobs affected and the value of arts in education which support our call for an increased investment can be found in the SouthArts publication, *Creative Industries in the South (Georgia)(2012)*, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices publication, *New Engines of Growth: Five Roles For Arts, Culture and Design (2012)*, and the National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, *Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools 1999-2000 and 2009-10*, and in the South Arts Research and Publication, *Arts Education in the South Phase I: Public School Data and Principals’ Perspectives 2014*.

Respectfully submitted as a Joint Statement by ArtsGeorgia, C4 Atlanta, the Georgia Alliance for Arts Education, and the Georgia Association of Museums & Galleries.

Other arts organizations or individuals who wish to join in supporting the call for an increased investment in state arts funding should contact either ArtsGeorgia at advocacy@artsgeorgia.net or the Georgia Alliance for Arts Education at aplus@artsedga.org.

About ArtsGeorgia

ArtsGeorgia works to support the arts by providing resources, and advocates for the arts by raising awareness and facilitating communication with development of innovative programs. ArtsGeorgia, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit statewide arts service corporation, is a National CoSponsor of AFTA's National Arts Advocacy Day. For more information visit <http://www.artsgeorgia.net/>

About C4 Atlanta

C4 Atlanta connects arts entrepreneurs to the people, skills and tools they need to build a successful artistic career in metro Atlanta. "True arts advocacy does not always come in the form of a knight in shining armor, and true arts leadership does not come with the power to move money. Every artist has the power within to become a transformative leader. The best arts advocacy lies in the power of the artist to transform people, businesses and whole communities." C4 Atlanta is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts business incubator, for more information visit <http://c4atlanta.org/>

About The Georgia Alliance for Arts Education

The mission of the Georgia Alliance for Arts Education is to ensure that all Georgia students, PreK-12, have access to a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential program of arts education, taught by teachers certified in the arts and enriched by the wealth of arts resources across the state. For more information on GAAE, a nonprofit arts service and advocacy organization, visit <http://www.artsedga.org/>

About the Georgia Association of Museums & Galleries

The mission of the Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries is to serve the entire state of Georgia as a private, non-profit museum and gallery association. The Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit statewide arts service corporation, is dedicated to serving a diverse membership in a way that establishes a responsive network, provides a resource base and promotes professionalism so that Georgia's museum community is strong, effective and proactive. For more information, visit <http://www.gamg.org/>

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