April 6, 2021

The Honorable Ben Allen
California State Senate, 26th District
State Capitol, Room 4076
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 628 (Allen) California Creative Workforce Act of 2021- SPONSOR/SUPPORT

Dear Senator Allen,

California Arts Advocates, California’s statewide arts advocacy organization, is pleased to offer our support and sponsorship for SB 628, the California Creative Workforce Act of 2021. SB 628

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit and shutdown industries across California, no sector has suffered the economic devastation as much as arts and culture. While some relief has come for venues, organizations, and for individuals through stimulus checks and pandemic unemployment assistance, the data shows that many have survived through accruing debt, depleting their savings, leaving the industry and some even leaving the state.

As the statewide advocacy organization for the arts, culture and creative industries in California, we are deeply concerned that unless immediate measures are taken to support what was one of California’s leading industries before the pandemic, California could face a cultural depression for years to come. In fact, a recent McKinsey and Company report states that in a muted recovery, they estimate that it will take until 2025 for the arts, entertainment, and recreation sectors to recover to pre-COVID 19 sector GDP.

The Impact

- 59% of creative workers were unemployed due to the shutdown.
- 69% of businesses including nonprofits severely impacted by COVID 19.
- Estimated 43.1 Billion revenue loss for creative industries in 2020.

Industry Facts, pre COVID

- $230.3 Billion generated annually by the Creative Industries.
- Represents 8.2% of the GSP for the state, ahead of the construction and transportation industries.
- Employs over 750,000 workers.

SB 628 represents an innovate solution to help build back the arts and creative industries workforce by offering jobs creation opportunities for the recently unemployed and workforce development for a new pipeline of creative workers.

Innovation is crucial to competition, and creativity is integral to innovation. According to 2019 LinkedIn behavioral data, creativity is the most in-demand soft skill in short supply. Additionally, a recent McKinsey study predicts that as automation transforms the skills companies need, demand for creativity will rise sharply by 2030. The training and development prescribed by SB 628 would serve people who are at the beginning of their
careers in the creative arts, Veterans, and returning citizens, and, among other things, would focus on building marketable skills in the arts and creative industries.

California has a unique opportunity to invest in a workforce that will help bring social and emotional wellness, community cohesion, jobs and economic benefit to every community across the state. Establishing and investing in the California Creative Workforce Act will put California in a leadership position as a forward thinking, innovation partner to business as well as the emotional and mental health benefits arts and culture brings to our lives.

We look forward to working with the Legislature to establish this effective solution to the crisis brought on by the pandemic for the creative industries and for California to not just recover from the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic but emerge in celebration of cultural equity and the recognition and investment towards one of California’s most important resources and export, the essential nature of arts workers and the creative industries.

For these reasons, the California Arts Advocates is pleased to sponsor SB 628 and would like to thank you for authoring this critical legislation.

Respectfully,

Executive Director, California Arts Advocates

California Arts Advocates (CAA), a nonprofit 501c(4) organization founded in 1996, is the only comprehensive, multidisciplinary organization focused on advancing and building public awareness of the value and impact of arts, culture and creativity across California. With over 15,000 active subscribers and hundreds of members representing thousands of artists and arts and cultural organizations, we take on opportunities and challenges that no single organization or artist can represent alone. Our mission at CAA is to ensure that the arts are accessible to all Californians; are an ongoing part of the public dialogue and to encourage Californians to care about the arts as a critical component of their own lives and the lives of their communities. We fight for arts resources and policies that benefit our members and all residents of California.

Respectfully,