Nonprofit Management Master's Program
School of Professional Studies
Columbia University

Nonprofits & Election 2020:
Policy and Advocacy in Action during the National Election Cycle

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Welcome

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Nonprofits & Election 2020:
Policy and Advocacy in Action during the National Election Cycle

Workshop Series Co-Creators

Principal,
Santa Consulting

Partner & Co-founder,
Urban Swirski &
Associates

Nonprofits & Election 2020:
Policy and Advocacy in Action during the National Election Cycle

The 2020 Election Cycle & the Nonprofit Organization: Intersections and Opportunities

November 7, 2019

Faculty House, Columbia University
Live webcast

TONIGHT'S SPEAKERS

Moderator

Sue Santa
Election Series Co-Developer
Adjunct Lecturer, M.S. Nonprofit Management, SPS Columbia University

Moderator

Sandra Swirski
Election Series Co-Developer
Partner & Co-founder, Urban Swirski & Associates

Guest Speaker

Steve Taylor
Senior Vice President & Counsel for Public Policy, United Way Worldwide

Guest Speaker

Nina Ozlu Tunceli
Chief Counsel of Government and Public Affairs & Executive Director, Americans for the Arts Action Fund

Presenting the Framework

Exploring Election Cycle Activities

COLUMBIA SPS
Nonprofit Management

TONIGHT'S CONVERSATION

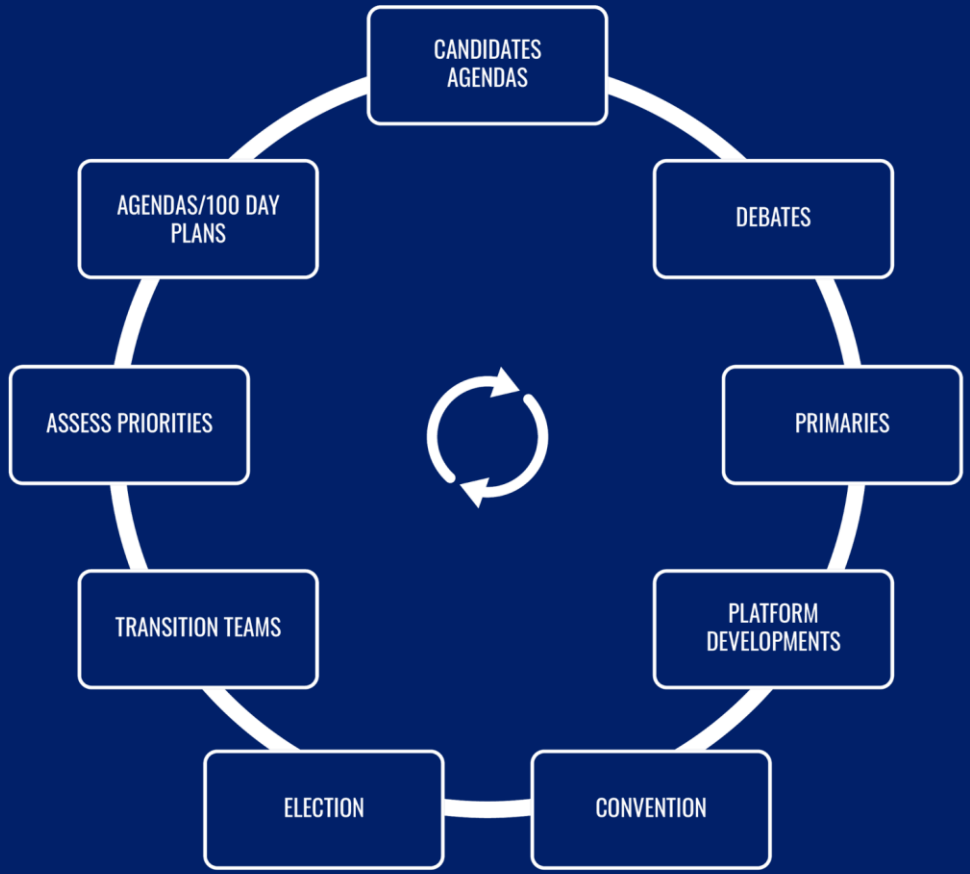
Influencing in an Election Cycle

What's at Stake?

How?

- Expert Panelists – Real-world Experience Navigating the Waters and Finding Harbors

NAVIGATING THE WATERS & FINDING HARBORS



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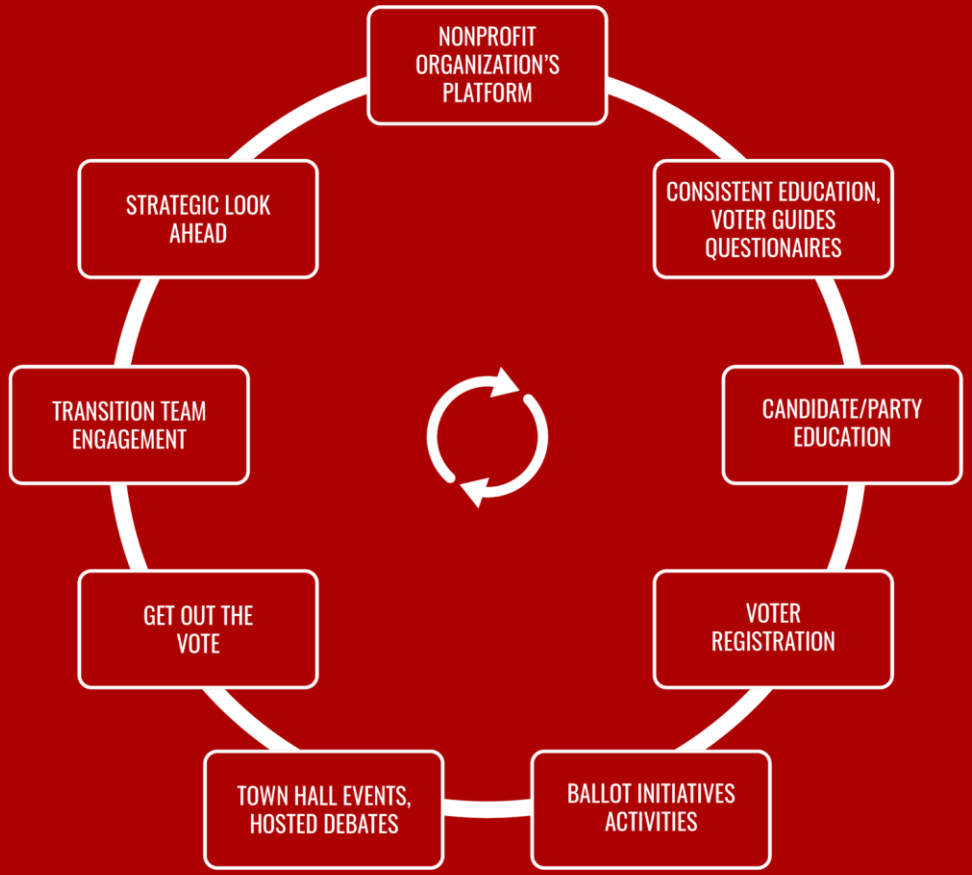
NONPROFIT ACTIVITIES DURING ELECTION CYCLE



YOUR STRUCTURE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

501(c)(3) may have related organizations which:

- operate under different legal guidelines, and
- have ability to work more directly in the political process

501(c)(4) Social Welfare Organization

527 Political Organization

Political Action Committee

Limited Liability Corporation (LLC)

*See *The Connection: Strategies for Creating 501(c)(3)s, 501(c)(4)s and Political Organizations*, 4th ed. 2018, from Bolder Advocacy, bolderadvocacy.org

MAKE THEIR ISSUES YOUR OPPORTUNITY

Shaping Government's Policy Agenda

- Election Activities can set – or re-set – Priorities
- National/State/Local Agenda
- Party Platforms
- Candidates Agendas

Examples of Issues

- Cannabis
- Opioids
- Gun Violence
- Climate Change
- Equality and Civil Rights

DEFINING YOUR AGENDA & SETTING PRIORITIES

FOCUS

- Issues that impact how you run your organization, “do business”
- Your core program areas interests

SCOPE

- Big picture, broad policy
- Specific proposals, targeted

POSITIONING

- Proactive; constructive (ideas we like)
- Challenging, defensive (ideas we don’t like)

WHY SHOULD NONPROFIT LEADERS ENGAGE IN ELECTION ACTIVITY, POLICY ADVOCACY?

IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO?

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Leaving Money on the Table

Unintended Consequences to Your Mission

Status Quo Can Be Better Than Losing.

A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Yes, there are limitations to what a 501(c)(3) is allowed.
But there's a lot you can do.

*Resource: Bolder Advocacy, www.bolderadvocacy.org

YES! YOU CAN...

KEY - Nonpartisan; No focus on individual candidate

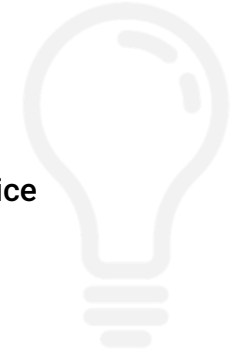
- Educate Candidates (offer to all)
- Host Candidate Debates or Town Halls (invite all)
- Prepare Voter Guides & Candidate Questionnaires (include all)
- Canvass the public on issues
- Engage in voter registration and Get Out the Vote (GOTV) activities
- Work with candidates/parties to get positions on platforms (offer to all)
- Publish Voting Records/Legislative Scorecards (within limitations)
- Fund public charities that engage in non-partisan voter engagement (within limitations)
- Engage in limited lobbying, including BALLOT INTIATIVES*

* NOT allowed, Private Foundations

NO! YOU CAN'T...

- Endorse candidates
- Publish/communicate anything that explicitly or implicitly favors or opposes a candidate
- Make candidate campaign contributions
- Make expenditures on behalf of candidates
- Offer property/resources to a candidate
- Ask candidates to sign pledges on an issue
- Undertake/increase incumbent criticism (or praise) within designated time before Election Day
- Engage in issue advocacy if your organization cannot articulate a clear, non-electoral purpose for activity or communication

RESOURCES



Bolder Advocacy, a project of Alliance for Justice

https://bolderadvocacy.org/resource-library

National Council of Nonprofits

https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources-categories/advocacy

Council on Foundations

https://www.cof.org/topic/advocacy-lobbying

Independent Sector

https://independentsector.org/policy

QUESTION

How can we navigate the waters and find harbors?

How can we harness the opportunity in an election cycle and jumpstart or elevate your policy work to have a dramatic impact on the organization and civil society?

QUESTION

Why does your organization view the Election Cycle as an advocacy opportunity?

QUESTION

How do you decide where to begin?
What to prioritize?

What factors – internal and external – go into setting priorities and driving your strategy?

QUESTION

What was an “Ah-Ha” moment in your experience – a learning moment, a revelation about the work, a success or shortcoming that altered the way you address election-related work?

NINA'S TOP TAKEAWAYS

- You Cannot Start Early Enough in Engaging in the Electoral Process.
- You Cannot Create Public Policy Without Politics.
- Effective Campaigns Must Have Both a Grassroots and a Grasstops Strategy.
- Connect Your Policy Needs with the Candidate's Policy Goals.

STEVE'S TOP TAKEAWAYS

- All Politics Is Local -- "local" is the nonprofit's strength.
- Nonprofits can meet candidates where they are better than anyone.
- Charities can bridge the partisan divide because they are by definition nonpartisan.

SUE AND SANDRA'S FOUR TAKEAWAYS

- It all starts with MISSION. Focus and purpose will move your policy and advocacy agenda further, faster.
- Elections are a treasure trove of trending ideas and issues. Find a comfortable entry point.
- Use your assets to stay in that stream. Take inventory of potential assets: board/leadership, programs, donors, volunteers, beneficiaries, community connections, reputation.
- Find friends. Allies - from expected to highly unlikely – can strengthen strategy, expand reach and amplify message.

Organizational Structures & Charity Status

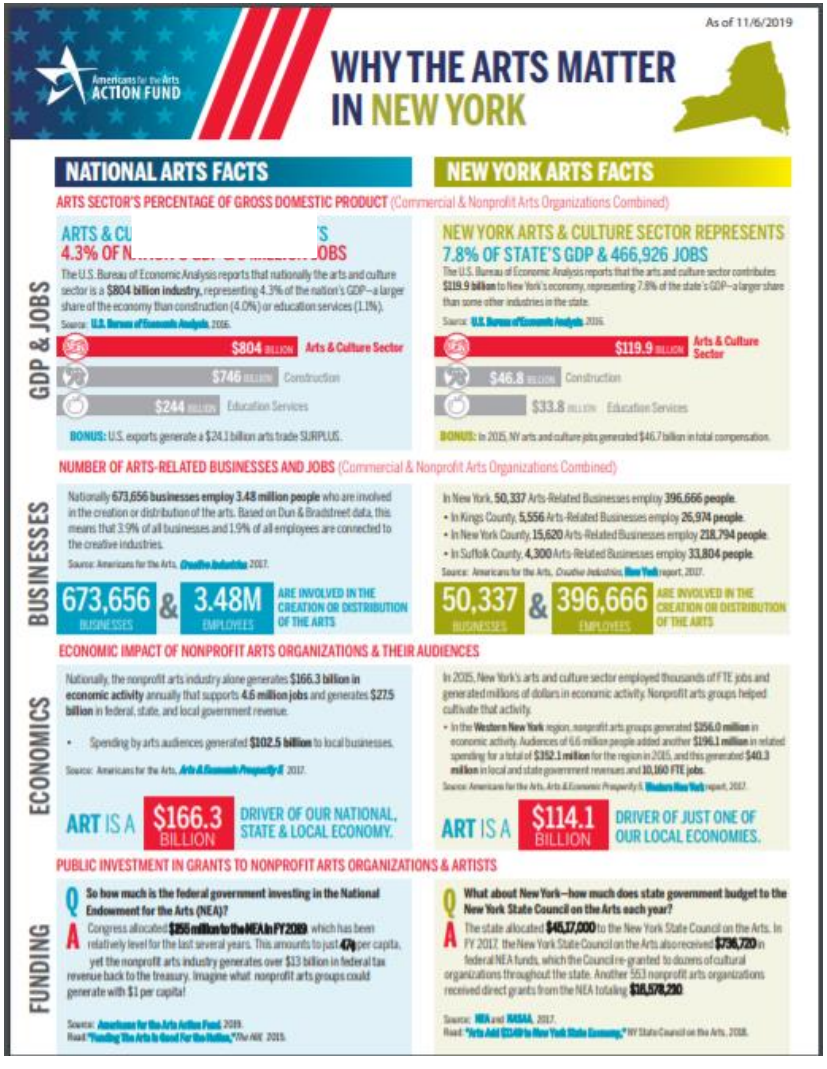
	AMERICANS for the ARTS	Americans for the Arts ACTION Fund	Americans for the Arts ACTION FUND PAC
Legal Structure	• Section 501 (c)(**3**) educational nonprofit • Regulated by the Internal Revenue Service	• Section 501 (c)(**4**) social welfare nonprofit • Regulated by the Internal Revenue Service	• A separately segregated bank account administered by the Arts Action Fund only • Regulated by the Federal Election Commission
Charity Status	• AFTA is a charity • Org pays no income tax • Donors **can** take a tax deductible for a charitable contribution • 5% budgetary limit on lobbying • 100% expressly prohibited from electioneering work	• AAF is **not** a charity • Org still pays no income tax • However donors **cannot** take a tax deduction as a charitable contribution • **No** budgetary limit on direct or grassroots lobbying • 49.9% budgetary limit on election work	• PAC is not an org nor a charity • PAC pays no income tax • Donors cannot take a tax deduction for a PAC contribution • Maximum contribution is $5,000/year • Maximum distribution to a candidate is $5,000/election/year • No budgetary limit on lobbying or electioneering.

ARTS
ADVOCATE
and I vote!
Americans for the Arts
ACTION Fund
www.ArtsActionFund.org

Arts +
Social Impact
Explorer
Click any topic on the wheel to learn more.
INFRASTRUCTURE
INNOVATION
EDUCATION
SOCIAL JUSTICE
ADVOCACY
CULTURE & HERITAGE
HEALTH & WELLNESS
YOUTH
ENVIRONMENT
ECONOMY
ACCELERATE & LEAD
NATIONAL
TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
PLANNING
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
EDUCATION & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
LIFELONG LEARNING
CIVIC DIALOGUE
COMMUNITY COHESION
POLITICAL ACTIVATION
IMMIGRATION
TOURISM
MILITARY
HISTORY, TRADITION & HERITAGE
DIVERSITY, ACCESS, EQUITY & INCLUSION
ART
HEALTH & WELLNESS
AGING
PERSONS & INCARCERATION
PUBLIC WELFARE
LIVABILITY
RELIGION AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING
ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

ArtsVote 2020: Leveraging Upcoming Election

- C3: Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) Campaigns
- C3: New Hampshire and Iowa Arts Forums
- C3: Advocacy trainings in early primary states
- C3: Arts Questions to Ask Candidates
- C3: 2020 Presidential & Party Arts Platform Statements
- C3: DNC and RNC Events in Milwaukee and Charlotte
- C4: Presidential Podcast Interviews with Ben Folds
- C4: 2020 Candidate Questionnaire
- C4: Congressional Arts Report Card of Incumbents
- PAC: Candidate Endorsements & Financial Contributions



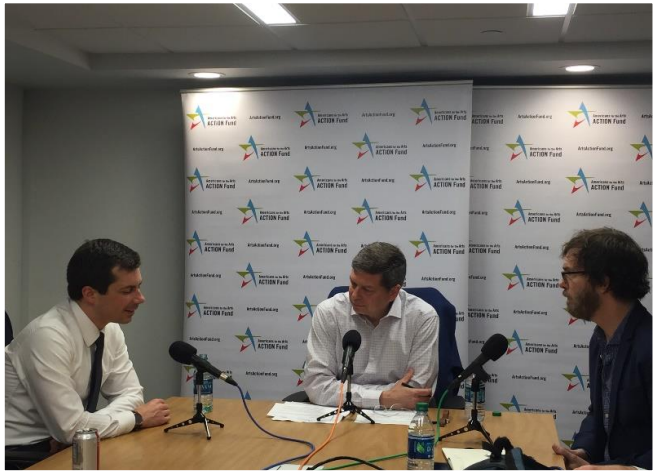
www.ArtsActionFund.org/why-arts-matter

Download the one for your state!

Americans for the Arts
ACTION Fund

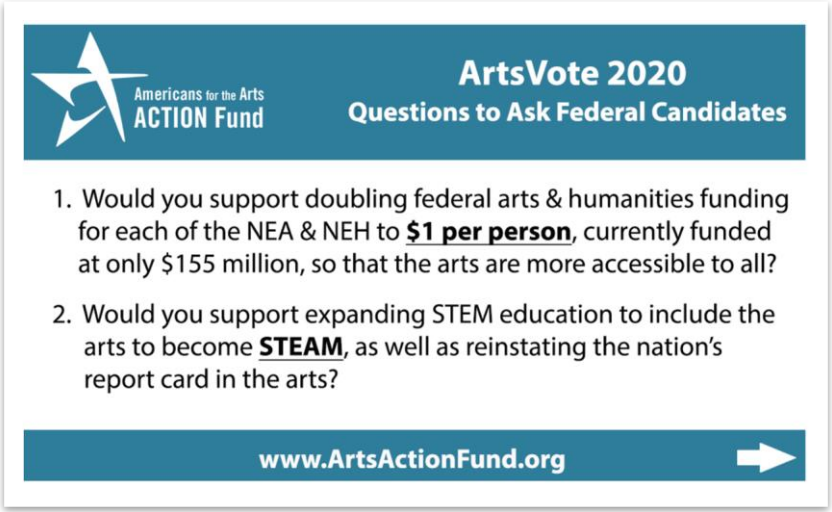
ArtsVote 2020 with BenFolds

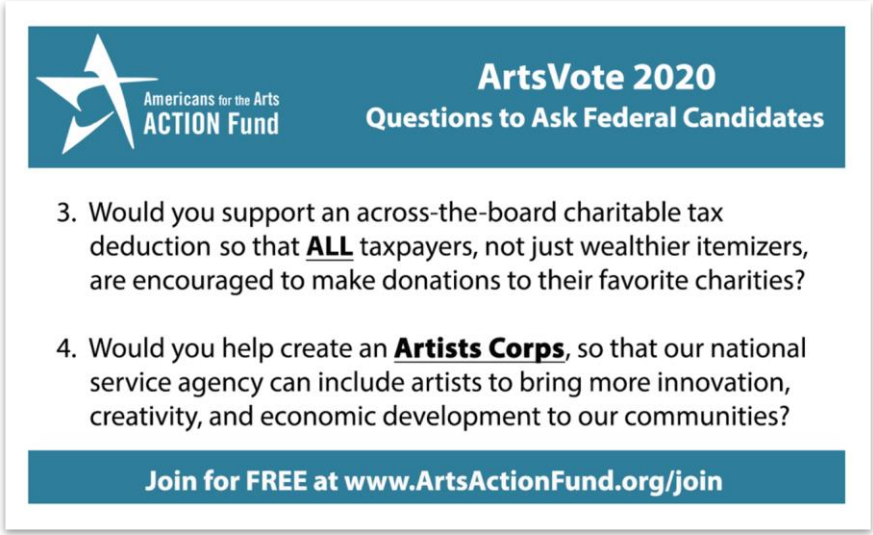
A podcast series on arts & politics



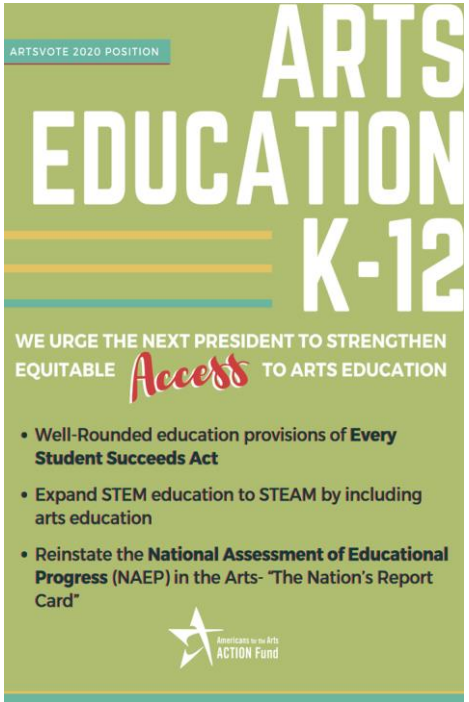
www.ArtsActionFund.org/podcast

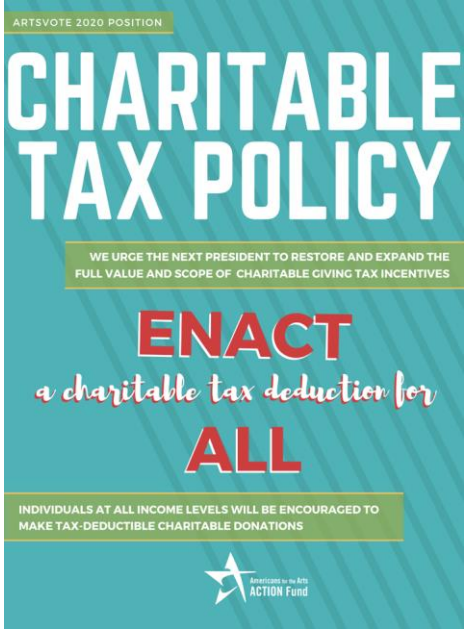
Arts Questions to Ask Candidates
Pocket Cards





ARTSVOTE 2020 POSITION
ARTS FUNDING
WE URGE THE NEXT PRESIDENT TO DEMONSTRATE NATIONAL AND GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN SUPPORTING THE ARTS IN AMERICA BY...
• Increasing public funding for arts and humanities grants
• Indexing budgets of the NEA and NEH to $1 per capita
• Making each budget $327 million per year
ADVANCE CREATIVITY & INNOVATION
Americans for the Arts ACTION Fund


ARTSVOTE 2020 POSITION
ARTS EDUCATION K-12
WE URGE THE NEXT PRESIDENT TO STRENGTHEN EQUITABLE Access TO ARTS EDUCATION
• Well-Rounded education provisions of **Every Student Succeeds Act**
• Expand STEM education to STEAM by including arts education
• Reinstate the **National Assessment of Educational Progress** (NAEP) in the Arts- "The Nation's Report Card"
Americans for the Arts ACTION Fund


ARTSVOTE 2020 POSITION
CHARITABLE TAX POLICY
WE URGE THE NEXT PRESIDENT TO RESTORE AND EXPAND THE FULL VALUE AND SCOPE OF CHARITABLE GIVING TAX INCENTIVES
ENACT
a charitable tax deduction for
ALL
INDIVIDUALS AT ALL INCOME LEVELS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CHARITABLE DONATIONS
Americans for the Arts ACTION Fund

CREATE ACT & Artist Corps
ARTSVOTE 2020 POSITION
WE URGE THE NEXT PRESIDENT TO SUPPORT C.R.E.A.T.E. ACT LEGISLATION IN ORDER TO...
• Invest in the country's creative workforce and economy
• Recognize artists, entrepreneurs, and nonprofit arts organizations as contributors to the small business community
• Support the creative economy through federal programs and actions, including the creation of an Artists Corps for national service
Americans for the Arts ACTION Fund

#ArtsPlatform

Sign THE 2020 ARTS PLATFROM PETITION

TO THE DNC AND RNC

We need your **support** to make the arts and humanities accessible to

Americans for the Arts
ACTION Fund

Q & A

The 2020 Election Cycle & the Nonprofit Organization: Intersections and Opportunities

Moderators: Sue Santa & Sandra Swirski

Panelists: Steve Taylor & Nina Ozlu Tunceli

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To learn more about the Nonprofit Management Program

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