

Jennifer Kleven
Regarding AB219

Good afternoon, Chair Backus and Committee members, my name is Jennifer Kleven, I am the Deputy Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs for the City of Las Vegas, and I'm here to speak in support of AB219.

For more than 40 years, the city of Las Vegas has been an active arts and cultural programmer, providing opportunities for the public to experience and appreciate art in all its forms. We operate three outdoor stages, two mobile stages, multiple cultural centers, three theaters and a number of art galleries. We work with community groups to conceive and support dance performances, choral concerts, music and book festivals and additional arts education opportunities.

The city takes great pride in working with local artists and performers to showcase a variety of artistic disciplines. We program our calendar of events sometimes years in advance using the budget our mayor and city council approves. However, throughout the year, we are contacted by individual artists and groups who are eager to co-produce events, but we often find that, unfortunately, we are out of budget.

Not to be deterred, we work with these groups on Nevada Arts Council grants so that we can support and pay the artists for their work. Since 2014, the city of LV has received \$113,712 in grant awards. Through these grants, the Arts Council and the city partner to directly support Southern Nevada artists and arts organizations.

One example is our most recent grant award with artist Jason Nious the founder of Molodi, a group that specializes in stepping, a polyrhythmic, percussive dance style. Their "Let Us Play" festival was hosted at the West Las Vegas Arts Center on Dec 28 in conjunction with our annual Kwanzaa Celebration and incorporated dance performance, dance instruction, storytellers, drumming workshops and a culminating drumming circle. This was a free event. Mr. Nious is a current International Museum of Dance Artist in Residence and has recently premiered a new stage production, *Roots: Let Us Play*, in San Francisco. Our efforts to support his vision for the "Let Us Play" festival has enabled him to further refine complementary programming for his touring stage production which can lead to more opportunities for the artist. It also helped the city provide a more engaging experience for visitors.

The artists we work with not only provide enjoyment and learning opportunities for our communities, but they develop and hone their craft which is then exported nationally to other communities. The Nevada Arts Council provides the resources for the city to pay artists for the work they do and provide for the community. Nevada Arts Council grant awards bring economic mobility for artists and stimulates business for surrounding communities.

Municipal budgets have become tighter in recent years so additional funding to the Nevada Arts Council would be a great benefit to the city; we'd be able to continue supporting artists who perform or exhibit at our venues. We would not have to cut programming or reduce our artist rates. This is a major benefit for the residents of the city of Las Vegas and the surrounding county who seek out our events, which are often free, to experience and enjoy with their families and neighbors.

Increased funding would allow the Arts Council to more effectively meet its mission, and that would benefit all of Nevada, including our residents in the city of Las Vegas.

Additionally, we could begin to see more artists and arts organizations proliferate in southern Nevada because they would have the financial means to do so. This is a major win for the city because we'd have more diverse voices to showcase.

The city of Las Vegas is a payer of the Live Entertainment Tax through the tickets we sell at our box offices. Allocating 1% of Live Entertainment Tax to the Nevada Arts Council means that the taxes we pay could down the line be used to support the artists we showcase on the stage. This would demonstrate true investment in Nevada arts and culture.

Increasing funding for the NV Arts Council is a direct investment in the residents we jointly seek to serve - an investment that enriches their lives. We encourage your support of AB 219.

Thank you,

Jennifer Kleven