

My name is Lois Welk. I am the Director of Dance/USA Philadelphia. Thank you for being here.

Inspired by the wonderful Peggy Amsterdam of the Cultural Alliance, I say --  
**Harrisburg, What are you thinking?**

The non-profit cultural community serves, cares, nurtures and provides to the citizens of PA. In these tough economic times, the arts community it is like a boxer after multiple blows, staggering to stay on its feet, bloodied and battered by diminishing revenue, both contributed and earned. This hero that educates and inspires is dealt another kick in the stomach – from our own government! from our own elected representatives!

This tax amounts to taxing citizens for participating in activities that are clearly good for them. What's next? Taxing people for eating fresh vegetables?

At a time when Americans are famous, internationally, for our obesity, we are taxing activities that promote health and longevity.

**In my mind, this is a fight over values, not money.**

We will not condone the acts of a government that does not value education, health, inspiration, economic development and regional pride.

There has been a cheap attempt to turn this into an urban vs. rural, or rich v. poor debate. **Only 7% of arts audiences are wealthy (total household income >\$150,000/year).**

Prior to my move to Philadelphia, I spent 22 years working in the arts in a rural community of 12,000. If anything, the arts mean even MORE for a small community. In many cases it is the first and only experience young people have of diverse cultures.

I brought an African dance company to perform at a recreation center in a small isolated community and except for what they saw on television, it was the first time some of those children had ever seen a black person. I know it had an impact because years later I bumped into one of the students in a grocery store who said to me, "I'll never forget it. I'll never forget that African Dance."

This is a tax on memories, on dreams and on the quality of life of Pennsylvanians.

Arts organizations do much more than wait for people to come to the theater. They reach into communities and deliver arts education.

Here are a few examples from the dance community:

- West Chester Dance Works reaches 1,000 school children with their program annually.
- Each Year at the Kimmel Center 2,600 students attend matinee performances designed especially for them, another 2,000 attend classes with 175 receive scholarships to Teen Summer Camp.
- Anne Marie Mulgrew and Dancers Co. has over the years provided 57 residency programs in inner city schools, and offers 100 dance fitness classes annually.

Dancers, the athletes and poets of performing arts, are practically an endangered species. Harrisburg, put down the rifle. Open your eyes. You are taking pot shots at a fragile ecology.

**There are 4,900 non-profit arts and culture orgs in PA and 86% of them small and volunteer driven with operating budgets of less than \$250,000.**

Instead of pushing us all toward the edge of the cliff you should be rolling up your sleeves to pull us all back to safety – so that every museum, dance company, gallery, festival, orchestra, theater company, film society can continue to inspire, refresh, and entertain children, adults, seniors --- all the citizens of PA.