



For Immediate Release

GOVERNOR'S SWEEP OF FUNDS TO PAY FOR TEACHER RAISES WILL CRIPPLE ARTS AGENCY THAT SUPPORTS EDUCATION EFFORTS STATEWIDE

PHOENIX, Ariz. (April 18, 2018): Arizona Governor Doug Ducey's proposed plan to pay for well-deserved raises for teachers statewide ironically includes sweeping \$2 million in funding designated for Arizona Commission on the Arts, a cut that could reduce the agency's grants made to nonprofit arts organizations throughout the state by up to 70 percent and could lead to the elimination of arts programs for schools and communities statewide.

"We do not believe that Arizona's teachers, the parents that support them, nor the numerous organizations endorsing the Governor's commitment to the cumulative 20% pay raise intended that the lion's share of state funding for arts organizations would be reduced or eliminated considering all that these arts organizations do to complement, support and enhance arts education programs across Arizona communities," said Arizona Citizens for the Arts Executive Director Catherine "Rusty" Foley.

"While the funds swept from the Arts Commission budget would represent less than 1% of the teacher pay package, the sweep would constitute a nearly 50% reduction to the agency's overall budget. Though other agencies will be sorely impacted by this plan, few if any stand to lose such a great percentage of their funding."

Foley said, "Arizona Citizens for the Arts fully supports efforts by teachers to secure well-deserved raises. Many, many artists in Arizona are among those teachers and work collaboratively with arts organizations in their communities to complement, support and enhance arts education programs across Arizona."

She added that, "absent any other source of funding," Arizona Citizens for the Arts and the organization's advocates and nearly 100 members, "believe the \$2 million for the Arts Commission should be restored and funded – as it has been for the last five years – from interest earned from the state Rainy Day Fund.

"The money appears to be there, and it is NOT being used for the teacher pay package," she said.

For more information about Arizona Citizens for the Arts, visit
www.azcitizensforthearts.org.

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Arizona Citizens for the Arts, a 37-year-old 501 c3 organization, acts as the eyes, ears and voice of the nonprofit arts and culture sector in Arizona at the State Legislature, in local city halls and partnerships with business and community leaders involved in building and supporting quality of life in Arizona.