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August 2, 2018

Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez-Fletcher
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 933 (Allen) Visual and Performing Arts Program - Support

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez-Fletcher:

On behalf of the County of Santa Barbara, we are writing to express our support for the Senate Bill 933 of 2018, which would create the "Arts for Every Student Act," which will provide California school districts with a "jump start" in arts education.

Authored by Senator Ben Allen, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, Senate Bill 933 can help provide our students with more robust visual and performing arts instruction. California Education Code states that every K-12 student shall receive instruction in and access to arts education. Per the California Arts Education Data Project, it has been demonstrated that only 39% of students in California public schools participate in the arts, and *that access is significantly lower in low-income and rural schools.*

The County of Santa Barbara proudly supports and believes in arts education and the arts for every resident. To this effect, Santa Barbara offers \$50,000 annually in Community Arts Enrichment Grant Funding with an emphasis in providing access to arts for underserved communities. During each grant cycle, over half of these grants support programs in our local schools for in-school and after school enrichment programs. Even with this additional help, many of our local school's grapple with insufficient resources to provide a STEAM education. This bill is critical to provide all students with access to quality arts education.

The arts prepare our students to enter the workforce by fostering skills that include innovation, persistence, and collaboration. Creative industries account for one out of every ten jobs in California, and provide over \$273 billion annually to our state's economy. Arts and culture are essential and relevant to every child's education. We specifically address this in the Santa Barbara County 2018 Legislative Platform passed and adopted by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors. On Page 2, under *Arts and Culture*, we include a section titled *Creating a Workforce for the 21st Century- Support for Arts Education in Schools*, noting that "Studies have proven that workforce needs are dramatically shifting. The Business Sector and companies are looking for employees with new skill sets that focus on "out of the box" thinking and solutions; and workers that do well as part of a team. Studies show that arts in schools help develop these skills and better prepare youth for the job market and new career paths. Studies show that students exposed to arts in school stay in school and are less likely to drop out."

Santa Barbara County hosts many districts and schools in low-income communities, where our students are statistically over 50% less likely to receive the benefits of arts instruction when compared to more affluent communities. We wish for all of our students to receive a quality education that isn't impacted by their zip code or household income. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Cliff Berg

Governmental Advocates, Inc.

CC: The Honorable Senator Ben Allen, Author
Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Natasha Collins, Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Bob Becker, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, 13th Senate District
Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham, 35th Assembly District
Assemblymember Monique Limon, 37th Assembly District
Dennis Bozanich, Legislative Coordinator, County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisor