ARIZONA NEEDS ARTS AND CULTURE
Deep state and local budget cuts to arts commissions, institutions, universities and public schools will have a tremendously negative effect on the creative cluster and will severely disable their ability to serve the public.

Studies show that involvement in the arts helps children do better in school. Unfortunately, with the state budget cuts, funding for arts programs in our schools has been severely reduced and will most likely worsen in the near future.

Some major arts and culture institutions are facing budget cuts as high as 50%-70%. These drastic cuts have caused some institutions to begin staff reductions, layoffs and furloughs.

Performances have been cancelled across the state from institutions such as Ballet Arizona, and an entire concert series, “Close Encounters with Music,” was closed completely.

INVESTING IN A STRONG CREATIVE CLUSTER has proven to be transformational. Competing cities such as Austin, Salt Lake City and Denver simultaneously strengthened their creative communities while dramatically diversifying their economies and regions by investing in their creative clusters.

An innovation economy requires that the creative community be front and center. The creative community is an economic driver – helping to attract and retain workers in the fields of medicine, technology, design and biotechnology that will diversify our economy.

Sustaining the arts and culture community for the future must be a priority. Not only will it help drive our economy, people overwhelmingly want arts and culture institutions and activities to be accessible to the public, to enhance their communities, and to be available for schools to educate young people and give students a chance to learn and be exposed to creative experiences.

Denver created a special science and cultural facilities district (SCFD) with a 1% regional sales tax.

Arts and culture created $1.69 billion in metro area economic activity in 2007. Economic activity includes $936 million in audience spending, $701 million in operating expenditures, and $53 million in capital expenditures.

Economic activity for 2007 increased 19% over 2005. A catalyst for this economic activity was $42 million of SCFD funding. This “new money” – money that normally would not be spent in the metro area – equates to $392 million of economic impact in 2007.