

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), co-chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus, today issued the following statement on the 50th Anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's inaugural address.

In a speech we still celebrate today delivered in 1961, Kennedy said, "Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce."

In Slaughter's district alone there are 1,229 arts-related businesses employing 15,864 individuals.

Slaughter said, "President Kennedy was an ardent supporter of the arts because he recognized that in addition to the aesthetic beauty it provides to all of us, there is an intrinsic value the arts have to the general advancement of America. He said, 'There is a connection, hard to explain logically but easy to feel, between achievement in public life and progress in the arts.' It's hard to argue with him when you see the major economic impact the arts have on the American economy. Each year the arts industry generates \$166.2 billion in economic activity, and provides 5.7 million full-time jobs.

"Given these steep economic consequences, we must make it a priority to support a fully funded National Endowment for the Arts. NEA funding is an investment in the arts, but it's also an investment in communities and jobs. We must stand up for this vital link to increased cultural tourism, arts education, the creative sector, and state and local economies all across the country."

For more on Slaughter's work on the arts, [click here](#) .