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John D. Sparks

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Amiel

American Symphony Orchestra League

August 8, 1994

United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator:

I am writing to thank you for your support of the Cultural Partnerships for At-Risk Children and Youth program in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (S. 1513), and to ask you now to work in conference to eliminate the funding trigger contained in the Senate version.

Unless this particular requirement is eliminated, this important initiative will be rendered ineffective. As now written, the legislation prevents funding of the program unless the NEA, NEH, and IMS all receive FY 1995 funding equal to or greater than that appropriated in FY 1994.

At this time, it is unlikely that this requirement will be met. We believe that it is the true intent of Congress to allow this creative program a chance. If funded, it would provide incentives to local schools and cultural organizations to form partnerships to target at-risk youth for local programs. Similar projects, undertaken on a limited basis, have demonstrated great potential.

The American Symphony Orchestra League, representing the interests of nearly 1,600 orchestras across the country, believes that the nation's performing arts community can be an important component in addressing these problems.

The Cultural Partnerships for At-Risk Children and Youth program would facilitate that effort. We ask that you urge your fellow conferees to produce a final bill that will make this possible.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



John D. Sparks
Director of Government Affairs

JDS:jar