

## Rebecca Buck

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**From:** Jane Kitchel <janek45@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2015 3:31 PM  
**To:** Rebecca Buck  
**Subject:** FW: Level Funding for Arts and Humanities!  
**Attachments:** Senate Appropriations.jpeg

Please add to committee correspondence.

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Date: Mon, 16 Mar 2015 10:24:44 -0400  
Subject: Level Funding for Arts and Humanities!  
From: [vwhenningsen@gmail.com](mailto:vwhenningsen@gmail.com)  
To: [jkitchel@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:jkitchel@leg.state.vt.us); [anitka@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:anitka@leg.state.vt.us); [rmccormack@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:rmccormack@leg.state.vt.us); [rsears@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:rsears@leg.state.vt.us); [dsnelling@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:dsnelling@leg.state.vt.us); [rstarr@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:rstarr@leg.state.vt.us); [icampbell@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:icampbell@leg.state.vt.us)

16 March 2015

To Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee

We write with great concern to request that you support Governor Shumlin's proposal to level-fund the Vermont Humanities Council, the Vermont Historical Society, the Vermont Arts Council, the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, and Vermont PBS. While we don't agree with Governor Shumlin on many things, we do think he's on target here.

Together, these organizations speak to and nourish the life of the mind, the imagination, and the spirit. We're very much aware of the difficulties Vermont faces in trying to close what seems an ever-growing budget gap and we strongly support the Legislature's determination to address the basic necessities – food, clothing, shelter, health care, and education – of all Vermonters, particularly the neediest. But we'd urge you to consider, for a moment, how the work of these organizations may also be considered to address basic needs.

Take the Vermont Humanities Council as an example. State support makes up 17% of their revenue and they steward their limited resources extremely carefully: partnering with 373 other organizations - from UVM, VPR, and the Vermont correctional system all the way to local libraries and schools - to deliver, *every day*, what the National Endowment for the Humanities (in singling the VHC out for distinction among the nation's 50 such councils) called "*life-changing impact on the lives of vulnerable people to the enhancement of civic discourse and community life across the state.*" The point here is that the state's investment in the VHC is not only maximized, but multiplied many-fold because of the way the VHC goes about its work.

States throughout the nation have abandoned their commitment to support the arts and humanities. In an effort to find short-term savings, they have surrendered long term investment in the things that help develop the independent-thinking, community-minded citizenry we depend upon to ensure our future. In the words of English essayist Samuel Johnson, the arts and humanities "help people a little bit better to enjoy life,

or a little bit better to endure it.” That may not seem much, but try to imagine life without the services these organizations provide and see how much more difficult it is to enjoy and endure.

Even in deeply troubled economic times Vermont has sought to address the intangible needs of its citizens as well as the more concrete necessities and has done a good job of balancing both.

We hope and trust that you will continue that tradition.

Respectfully,

Victor W. Henningsen  
Thetford Center

Susan R. McCaslin

Signed copy attached.