

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

President Donald J. Trump
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

February 5, 2026

Dear President Trump:

We write to ask you to immediately provide us with all relevant information about your reported decision to shutter the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for the next two years. This decision likely violates the essential purposes and intent of the federal law establishing this beloved national memorial to the late President John F. Kennedy and raises a multiplicity of serious legal and policy questions that need to be addressed before anything irreversible happens.

Far from being “tired, broken, and dilapidated,”¹ the Kennedy Center was beautifully renovated and expanded as recently as 2019. We are thus alarmed by reports of the imminent destruction of the Kennedy Center’s physical structure in the immediate wake of the recent unannounced and unauthorized destruction of the East Wing of the White House, another treasured and iconic part of our national heritage. We do not presume to know what is true about another unannounced, unauthorized but apparently imminent demolition of an essential American memorial and institution, but if published reports are true, we urge you to halt this reckless and impetuous vanity project without the participation of the people’s representatives in the United States Congress.

As you doubtless know, following the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, the National Cultural Center Act was amended to create a “living memorial” and “sole national memorial” to President Kennedy. Remaking this “national memorial” as a monument to anyone or anything other than President Kennedy is plainly contrary to federal law and ultra vires.

The Act explicitly requires the Board of Trustees to “present classical and contemporary music, opera, drama, dance, and poetry from this and other countries” for the enjoyment of the American public. The Act also directs the Board to manage the building and site in a manner consistent with its status as a national Presidential memorial and to “provide facilities for other civic activities at the Cultural Center.”

Your putative decision to close the Kennedy Center for two years beginning July 4, 2026 would almost certainly prevent the Board from fulfilling its congressional mandate to provide performing arts activities and facilities for other civic activities which have been enjoyed under the law by the American people for more than half a century.

¹ <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115997939705121174>

The closure of this national treasure could cancel more than 2,200 annual performances and exhibits and eliminate 400 free community events, to the sharp detriment of the Center's two million annual visitors who are the intended audience and beneficiaries of the Act.

It is also unclear how many, if any, Kennedy Center staff will continue to be employed through the prospective closure, or how the National Symphony Orchestra and the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra will feasibly be able to be relocated to continue their outstanding first-class performances. This decision will at the very least destabilize these orchestras and their support staff and could threaten their existence altogether.

We are frankly alarmed that this assault on the Kennedy Center community seems to reflect your recurring impulse to destroy independent art and music in our nation. In a radical departure from the Center's proudly bipartisan history, you purged the Kennedy Center Board of its independent Trustees, amended the Board's bylaws to vest all voting power in your appointed loyalists, and even, shockingly, added your own name like a delinquent graffiti artist to the only national memorial for the late beloved President John F. Kennedy.

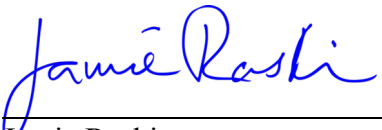
World-renowned artists including Philip Glass, Renée Fleming, and the cast of Hamilton cancelled performances in protest of these attacks on the independence and integrity of the Kennedy Center, and the Washington National Opera ended its more than fifty-year residency at the Center due to these stunningly tone-deaf and bullying actions.

We urge you to immediately announce a complete halt to your planned closure of the Kennedy Center, and we demand a detailed explanation of your original reasons for seeking to close the Center. Please send written responses to the following questions by no later than February 10, 2026.

1. Please explain how you will continue to follow the law providing performing arts and facilities for civic activities to the American public as mandated by the explicit language of the National Cultural Center Act.
2. Please provide an itemized accounting of all public and private funds you plan to use to carry out any planned renovations.
3. Please provide all "Highly Respected Expert" reports cited in your February 1 announcement that characterizes the Kennedy Center as "dilapidated" and "broken," thus necessitating a total two-year cessation of operations.
4. Please provide a complete list of all proposed structural renovations during the Kennedy Center's closure, provide any current architectural renderings of the proposed renovations, and a timeline for the Center's reopening.
5. Please provide all documentations and communications pertaining to the decision to close the Center, including a justification for why this renovation could not be a phased renovation, as was done in the most recent REACH expansion, and why the famously spacious Kennedy Center cannot continue its essential functions while renovation takes place.
6. Please provide your plan to protect the jobs of the people who regularly work or perform at the Kennedy Center.

7. Please provide a complete and detailed plan as to how you will relocate the National Symphony Orchestra, the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra as well as upcoming touring productions in a manner that allows them to continue their fine work in service of American arts and culture.
8. Please provide any legal analysis you have assembled about the various levels of historical, architectural and fine arts review that your plans must undergo by relevant local, regional and federal authorities.

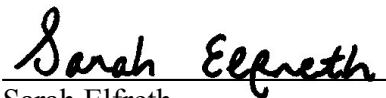
Very truly yours,



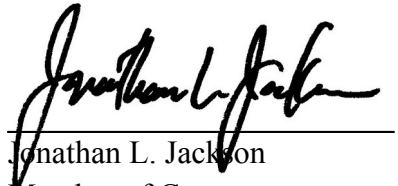
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



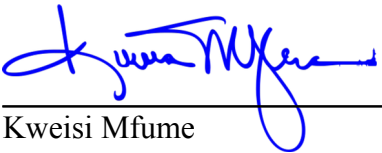
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



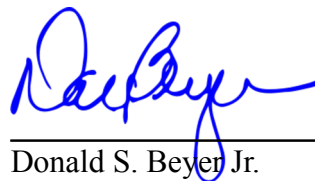
Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



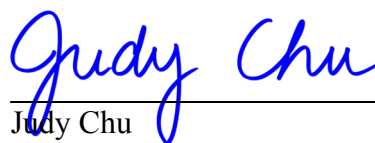
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



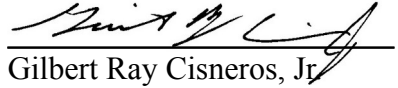
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



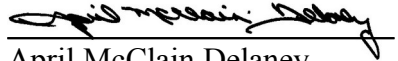
Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



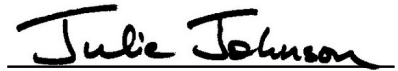
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Andre Carson
Member of Congress



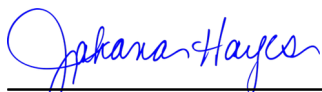
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Julie Johnson
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



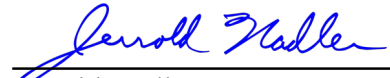
Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



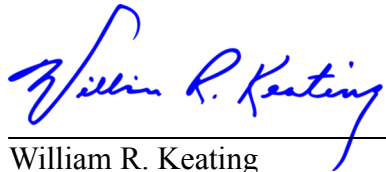
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



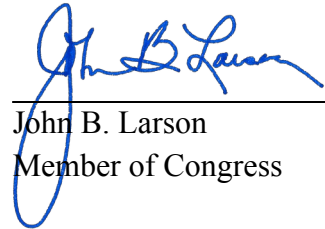
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



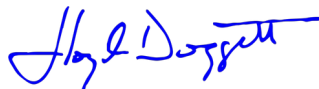
John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
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Rashida Tlaib
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Darren Soto
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Paul D. Tonko
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JM Tokuda
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Dina Titus
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Sean Casten
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Steve Cohen
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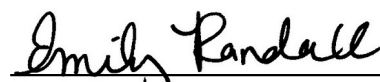
Sydney Kamlager-Dove
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Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



George Latimer
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Emily Randall
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



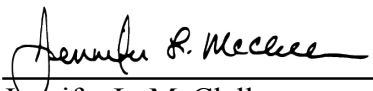
Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



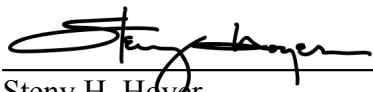
Gabe Amo
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Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



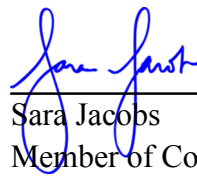
Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress