July 1, 2015

The State Journal-Register
One Copley Plaza
P.O. Box 219
Springfield, IL 62705

Dear Editor:

Person after person testified in front of the Illinois House of Representatives this week about how nonprofits do critical work on behalf of the state to address their needs, maintain safety, and provide real opportunity for them regardless of background [“Democrats push 1-month budget; Rauner, GOP likely to oppose,” July 1]. Unfortunately, many of these same Illinoisans also stressed the devastating impact that service cuts and lack of action will have on their livelihood.

The quality of Illinoisan’s lives depends on a variety of factors – access to education for our children, good parks, art and music, clean water, and help for those who need it. Our member organizations do this work every day and invest in the social, cultural, and environmental capital of Illinois.

The proposed cuts are shortsighted and fail to recognize the significant social return on investment that comes from supporting the work of the nonprofit sector. Donor Forum’s recent studies of three areas – Arts & Culture, the Environment, and Youth Development – show that for every dollar invested in each of these areas, we see a social return of $27, $58, and $45 respectively. The combination of private and public investment yields returns that are felt by individuals, families and broader communities. These three areas are just examples of the type of return we can see when we invest in critical institutions and supports.

Our state’s political leaders need to pass a budget that adequately funds the work of our members and our peer organizations throughout Illinois to ensure that we can continue to yield these returns for the residents of Illinois.

Sincerely,

Ra Joy, Executive Director, Arts Alliance Illinois
Andrea Durbin, CEO, Illinois Collaboration on Youth
Jennifer Walling, Executive Director, Illinois Environmental Council Education Fund