



SPECIAL PRESENTATION

**“ARTS, INC.
HOW GREED AND NEGLECT HAVE DESTROYED
OUR CULTURAL RIGHTS”**

MODERATED BY:

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PROGRESS**

FEATURED PANELISTS:

BILL IVEY, AUTHOR, ARTS, INC.

**ROBERT LYNCH, PRESIDENT AND CEO,
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MS. SALLY STEENLAND: On behalf of the Center, I want to welcome you to today's event to discuss the state of arts and culture in our nation today as seen through the lens of Bill Ivey's new book, *Arts, Inc.: How Greed and Neglect Have Destroyed Our Cultural Rights*. We're honored to have three distinguished guests with us today – first, Congressman Jim Cooper from the Fifth District of Tennessee, who will offer opening remarks, and also Bill Ivey and Robert Lynch.

I'll introduce them all in just a minute, but first, I'd like to set up today's conversation. To some of you, the Center for American Progress may seem like an unusual venue for a discussion about the arts and culture, but in fact, it's very fitting. At the Center, we pride ourselves in being cutting-edge and not doing things the old-fashioned way. As we like to say around here, "We are not your grandmother's think-tank."

We make it a practice to break out of the D.C. mold and use the arts to address policy issues. We believe that art resonates with people from all walks of life, and can help win hearts and minds in ways that studies and reports sometimes fail to do. Although the U.S. isn't usually thought of by the rest of the world as an arts powerhouse, we have, in fact, given birth to countless rich artistic traditions, from Louis Armstrong, B.B. King, and Elvis Presley to Jenny Holzer and Jeff Koons. America has built a cultural legacy that deepens our sense of identity at home and spreads our ideals abroad.

However, today that legacy is endangered. More and more, art is considered in narrow terms of copyright and intellectual property. These limitations threaten to destroy our access to our cultural heritage and they limit the creativity of artists. Too often, culture is thought of as a commodity, instead of a public good. It is seen as an extra, rather than a human right and a crucial aspect of good government, healthy communities and economic vitality.

Our guests today will talk with us about the looming crisis in the arts and what to do about it. You can find their detailed biographies in our invitation, but let me briefly introduce them.

Congressman Jim Cooper is from the Fifth District of Tennessee, which includes Nashville, home to some of our nation's most important cultural riches, as well as the entertainment industry. Congressman Cooper serves on the Armed Services Committee, the House Budget Committee, and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. He is a strong friend of the arts, seeing them as essential to our individual and national identity.

Bill Ivey was chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts during the Clinton administration from 1998 to 2001. Before that, he directed the Country Music Foundation in Nashville and is a four-time Grammy nominee. Bill is currently the

director of the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy at Vanderbilt University, and author of *Arts, Inc.*, an important and impassioned book that is the focus of our discussion today, and as you've seen, is for sale in the back.

Robert Lynch is the president and CEO of Americans for the Arts, where he has served since the organization's inception in 1996. Previously, Robert was executive director of the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies. Robert has spent 30 years working for the arts industry and brings passion and commitment to empower communities and leaders to advance the arts and art's appreciation in society.

It is a pleasure to have all of you with us today. And to get us started, I would like to turn the program over to Congressman Cooper. Thank you. (Applause.)

REP. JAMES COOPER (D-TN): Thank you, Sally. I'm delighted to be here, not just because I'm Bill Ivey's congressman. I could have easily ducked out of this event. I'm delighted to be here today because I think everybody needs to read this book. I required everybody on my staff to read it, including interns. I'm giving copies to my colleagues.

My theory is this. The unexamined life is not worth living. And one of my favorite economists, John Maynard Keynes, said that "We're all the slaves of some defunct economist." I don't want to be anybody's slave. And in the arts, I don't want to be the slave of any foreign multinational corporation. And so many legislators at the federal and state level have no idea about these issues. So many dedicated community volunteers back home, many of whom are affiliated with arts charities, have no idea what they're doing.

Now, these are all good people and they care. They have good hearts, but we cannot have such mistaken national policies as we're accumulating today. So I think Bill, at tremendous personal risk, has challenged some of these hierarchies and this upsets people. This catches them where they live.

I'm a big fan of Lawrence Lessig. I shouldn't say representing Nashville, but I like people who challenge conventional wisdom. You all know that the greatest form of wealth on earth is intellectual property and we're just barely understanding that. So whether it's a simple occasion, you're no longer allowed to sing "Happy Birthday" in a restaurant anymore, or at least the waiter or waitress isn't allowed to chime in, because Sir Paul McCartney owns "Happy Birthday." And if there's any commercialization of it, somebody could be caught short.

Certain things have gotten out of hand in this country. So I welcome this debate. I think Bill has done a brilliant job of opening up these issues so that they're understandable and able for legislators to deal with. So he has given us a huge challenge here. I look forward to a vigorous dialogue, not only at this meeting today at CAP, but throughout the city and nationwide. We cannot let these issues go away. Today, they're

being widely ignored. There's tens of millions of dollars showered on Washington, hoping we will ignore these issues. Let's prove them wrong. Thanks. (Applause.)

MS. STEENLAND: Thank you, Congressman Cooper. That was great. I'd like to start off our conversation by posing some questions to our panelists. At the end of the program, we'll take questions from all of you in the audience. So as you're listening to us talk, please be thinking of questions that you would like to ask because we'll be calling on you later on.

And this first question I'd like to ask to all of you, but Bill, I would like to start with you. You raise a lot of alarms in your book, and the subtitle of your book is *How Greed and Neglect Have Destroyed our Cultural Rights*. "Greed" and "neglect" are very strong words. So I'd like to ask why you chose those words. And then I'd like to ask the congressman and Bob Lynch for their views on what's gone wrong in terms of government and marketplace forces – but first: the words, greed and neglect.

MR. BILL IVEY: They are strong words. Of course, you want strong words on the dust jacket of your book, but they're not there by accident. They're there by design because those are, I think, the two kinds of cornerstones of the problem that we face around what you might call cultural policy or arts policy in the U.S. today.

On the one hand, greed is really about the breadth of the marketplace, marketplace influence in our cultural life, the duration and scope of intellectual property laws, the permission culture that is emerging within music, film, media, and neglect, really the inability of legislators and regulators to deal with these issues in a comprehensive way that engages the public interest.

The congressman alluded to Congress' failure to deal with these issues effectively. And I think we've seen marketplace forces come to a relatively inattentive government in a piecemeal manner, a little law here, a little regulation here, a little deregulation over there. And pretty soon, you have highly consolidated radio, and cultural assets that are owned by non-U.S. multinational corporations, and a system in which Americans basically have to pay a toll at a tollbooth every time they want to get access to, in many cases, their own cultural heritage.

If you think of – Louis Armstrong was mentioned in the introduction – Louis Armstrong's "West End Blues," one of the great classic recordings of America's jazz heritage, that recording is now owned by Sony-BMG. It's not a U.S. company. And I think we've never had the national conversation about where the public interest in access to heritage begins and ends, and where the interests of corporations who hold these same items as assets begins and ends. And I think it's a conversation that's long overdue. So there's greed on the marketplace side, and unfortunately, neglect, or at least ignorance, on the side of government regulation and legislation.

MS. STEENLAND: Congressman, what do you have to add to that in terms of market and government forces and any other ideas you have?

REP. COOPER: Short, simple stories – first, when Bill was a college student, his cultural budget was, what, 20 or 30 bucks a month? Now, these multinational companies want kids to spend \$4,000 or \$5,000 a year.

Other examples – did you know it's now illegal to use the image of a Hummer in an ad decrying gas guzzlers? They have gotten that copyright protection or trademark protection, courtesy of the U.S. Congress. We had no idea what we were doing.

Did you know there is a mine in Pennsylvania that stores most of the visual images of the world? And it's irretrievable unless you get the permission of some giant corporation. This is our heritage and it's largely locked away. I love companies; I love for-profit companies. I'm not against business. I teach at Vanderbilt Business School, but some of these things are getting out of hand.

MS. STEENLAND: Bob?

MR. ROBERT LYNCH: Well, first of all, with the congressman, thanks for being part of this. And I wanted to point out that we had brought our annual conference to Nashville a few years ago, and the economic impact, though, was what we were thanked for, which is, I think, part of the book's point. So often, arts activity is linked to practical things, like economics. And we were very thankful for that, thank you, and the help that we got, but – and then yesterday, we did a full-day think-tank with the Aspen Institute and with Wolf Trap on the issue of the arts going green or helping the world think more green – I think something that this book would be very interested in and having the arts play a role in and Kathy Mattea was part of it.

A couple of things I'd want to add to this – "greed" and "neglect," I think those are good words for this book, and I'd add to it "unenlightened self-interest" and "Balkanization" as things that have affected the entire art world and the non-profit world in particular. One of the things that I think is important to take a look at, to understand, is when we talk about culture, I think it's valuable to understand that we're talking about many different things that make up what the arts in America are.

And I'll just give four thoughts – one is there is the non-profit arts, of which there are 100,000 roughly organizations in America, and there's the for-profit arts which, depending upon how you define it – we used some Dun and Bradstreet data – is another 500,000 organizations in America. They function very differently, as the book illustrates.

Something that was less discussed in the book is the unincorporated, world of the volunteer members, which there are, I think, 25 million in America that you point out in the book and I find the most interesting part of our culture, the unincorporated piece; and then the individual artists themselves, which function in all of those areas, and which the federal government pins at about two million people who claim being an artist on their tax returns.

What I find interesting is that the government and the marketplace forces affect all of those, but they affect each very differently. In all cases, though, the marketplace is the defining emphasis. Even in the non-profit arts, 50 percent in general of the money that funds a non-profit arts organization comes from earned income from the marketplace. So we can get into how government affects each of those things differently, but I think that as we look at some of the questions that are talked about here and in the book, it's important for us to understand that the different forces, the different emphases and the different outcomes for those four markets.

MR. IVEY: And it's important – Bob kind of blew past this pretty quickly, but "culture" is a very problematic term. And you can look at it – "culture" with a small "c." Anthropologically, it's sort of the sum of all human behavior. And you put a capital "C" on "culture" and it's the opera and the art museum and the symphony orchestra. And I end up talking about something called the expressive life, which is somewhere between culture with a capital "C" and the sum of all human behavior. It includes even things like political speech, but it's really a place where you access heritage for a sense of identity, a sense of belonging, a sense of place, and where you also allow your own voice to come forward, your voice as an individual. I think if you have a vibrant, expressive life, that involves a balance between access to heritage and access to expression. And that's the definition that underlies the argument of *Arts, Inc.*

REP. COOPER: Does that include NASCAR?

MR. IVEY: It can include NASCAR in terms of the painting of the cars and the – (unintelligible).

MS. STEENLAND: The decorative arts.

MR. IVEY: Decorative arts.

MS. STEENLAND: The decorative arts, right. Well, I would just like to – I don't want to play devil's advocate exactly, but maybe reflect more in this next question a general sensibility of what culture is. And in your book, you make some pretty big policy recommendations that we'll get to in a minute. I think in order for these ideas to have some traction and be persuasive, we need to think about culture in a different way. And so instead of thinking of culture, "Well, it's a luxury; it's a nice thing to have, but it's not an essential. It's not putting food on the table. It's not a bread-and-butter issue." And it's a nice thing, but it's not a human right.

And in fact, in your book, you say, "Culture is a human right," which is a very, very basic thing. And so in these days, where there are home foreclosures and gas prices are high, how do you make that argument for – this is a question for all of you – how do you make that argument in a persuasive way to shift the thinking?

MR. IVEY: In some ways, when you talk about rights, they tend to be assertions. You don't build up evidence and say, "Oh, I've got enough evidence to call something a

right.” And I wanted to make some assertions because at the time I was leaving the NEA, we were doing all these high-fives because we’d acquired an extra \$10 or \$15 million for the agency. And literally, during the same years when we were working on advancing the NEA budget, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act was passed; a copyright was extended by 25 years; the U.S. Information Agency was shut down and rolled into the Department of State. In other words, there were policy decisions made over here that had a dramatic impact on the character of our culture.

And the smart cultural people were really concentrated on that narrow little window of policy – how do we get more money for the arts? And so I said, “Well, we need to step back and look at this entire system, not in relation to individual issues or arts funding or copyright, but in terms of a larger public interest.” And so I said, “Well, we have rights to certain things.”

And I began with heritage because I think that’s the strongest, one of the easiest to argue. I moved to a creative life; that’s your personal voice. And then I rather quickly talked about something I think would have real meaning to many in this room – how our culture moves around the world, the right to a coherent expression of America’s core values as our expressive life moves out. And I used the example of the television show “Baywatch,” being the most popular television program in small villages in Morocco. This would have been seven or eight years ago.

But when you have – the Broadcasting Board of Governors broadcasting Arabic radio, and Baywatch coming free to Arab satellite service into a small village in rural Morocco, what is the message that’s being delivered? What is the coherence? And I think if there’s any area where we can immediately sense that we need a more coherent way of dealing with policy around culture, it’s in the way our culture moves around the world because there are real diplomatic and, in fact, national security ramifications to the outcomes of cultural movement around the world.

So, to me, talking about rights is a way of moving us to a deeper conversation about the public interest. And I love how Bob thinks because Bob is the guy who’s perfectly positioned to be Mister Public Interest around culture. (Laughter.) But I always keep kind of nudging him to take that on.

MR. LYNCH: Well, what I think, first of all, is that I believe, and I think the book illustrates, that the arts as public policy, a core interest of America, is very clearly that, except it’s invisible as that. I think that’s the key thing. Every decision almost in this room has been affected by art and culture, from the way the stage is positioned here to the backdrop behind us, to the clothing that people have, to the existence of the cameras that are recording us here. They all have come about because of artistic interplay, cultural interplay with businesses or society.

And if you come into any town in America today, you will see evidence of good or bad arts and design decisions all around you affecting the economic driver. Why do people want to come to one place versus another? But we have let it be a fairly soft and

uncelebrated aspect of public policy. And I think that Bill makes a good point that we cannot let that happen anymore. We have to fight much harder on that.

And just one last thing, if I could say, the federal government is the tip, the tiny tip of that policy. I think that local decision-making, local government, state government, and the business sector, or, let's say, the consumer sector locally is what can really drive it, but federal government can play the huge leveraging role.

MR. IVEY: And I think just as Bob talks about the way we interact with our daily reality through art and culture, behind everything we consume is culture, even in the most casual way. There's a system of payments and gates and tollbooths that's also invisible and that can have a very powerful impact on the character of what we engage, what we have to pay to engage it, what's even available. And I think that if we can bring that system a little bit more out into the open and look at it as one big thing, not as a series of little policy decisions or pieces of legislation, I think we can begin at least to move toward enabling our cultural rights.

REP. COOPER: Art's not an option; it's a necessity because you cannot exist as a person without some expressive element to your life. So when times are hard, like they are right now, what do you want it to be, booze or art? (Laughter.) Now, the InBev purchase of Anheuser-Busch may have more of a cultural impact in my state. (Laughter.)

MR. IVEY: In country music, you combine them –

MS. STEENLAND: Yes!

MR. IVEY: We have a great tradition of that. (Laughter.)

REP. COOPER: And trains and momma and – but let me give you an example. There was a program in Nashville and Nashville is now bigger than Detroit, Michigan. Nashville's a joyful place due to our incredible artistic community and sometimes, it's an unexpected thing. It's like ring tones have helped a lot.

But there's a program in Nashville called Leadership Music. I had the privilege of doing it last year. It lasts all year long. People in Leadership Music, 30 or 40 folks, each class, are from the music industry, the different elements of the music industry. They have no idea what's going on with their counterparts companies – (unintelligible) – because one's a publisher; one's a musician; one's a songwriter – it's amazing, the diversity. And if they have no idea, legislators have no clue. So basically, through indecision and inaction and ignorance, we're making some horrendous mistakes. And that, to me, is what Bill's book is about. It's an enlightening experience to get you clued into what's really going on.

MS. STEENLAND: Well, let's talk about indecision, inaction, and what we really should be doing. As I said before, you make some big policy recommendations in your book, and one of the big recommendations, capital "B," capital "R," is that you call

for – and I want to make sure I get it right – a cabinet-level Department of Cultural Affairs. And this department would provide an integrated approach to cultural legislation, regulation and funding. So can you just talk about that a little bit and flesh that out a little bit, so we have a picture of what that might be, why you think that’s an important thing. And then Bob and Congressman Cooper, we’d like to get your sense of it. You think this big recommendation is a good idea?

MR. IVEY: I think it’s a good idea. And interestingly, when I was chairman of the NEA, I argued against it. It was a regular question

after speeches. You'd say, "Do we need a Department of Cultural Affairs or a Ministry of Culture?" I'd say, "Oh, no, no, no, we have this very diverse system." There was a kind of standard answer that I think had been given by chairmen for decades. But when I began to think about it, I realized what culture lacks in relation to public policy is a hub around which you can talk about the public interest.

And you think about the Environmental Protection Agency, with all of its problems, came along in 1970 and now has 17,000 employees. It’s all over. It’s taken a basic public good, clean air, and extended it into a whole realm of enhanced quality of life in many different directions. And when it makes a mistakes or when it gets out of line, we hear about it. We read about it on the front page of the *Post*, partly because it is a policy hub. There is a designated person who runs it. There are branches and limbs that move out from that authority and we know who’s accountable and we have a place where we can balance different aspects of the public interest around the environment. That’s something that we don’t have at the moment.

And I’ll be honest – I think that the marketplace has taken full advantage of the absence of some kind of a central public interest conversation to advance piecemeal a set of very selfish, narrow interests. And I’ll say, I think to the extent that as this book – if this book gets some traction, to the extent that the cultural industries, the for-profit industries, don’t like it, that’s, I think, a sign to me that I’m kind of on target with the recommendation. But to me, that’s the main reason for that central authorities to have a place to talk about public policy because we politicize – our Congress has hearings when Janet Jackson’s breast pops out at a Super Bowl half-time show. We do – we mess with content and – but we do it without ever stepping back and asking – what serves the American people in our cultural system? How can we serve the American people?

MR. LYNCH: Bill’s asked me a number of times what I think about this idea. I haven’t told him that.

MR. IVEY: Yes, you did.

MR. LYNCH: So –

MS. STEENLAND: Here for the first time – Robert Lynch?

MR. LYNCH: But – and what I'll say first is that for the last year, Americans for the Arts is really two organizations – Americans for the Arts, the 501(c)(3), which is mostly what we're talking about here, and Americans for the Arts Action Fund, our political wing, the 501(c)(4). And the 501(c)(4) for the last year has been involved in trying to get an art's understanding and messaging to each of the presidential campaigns and we have 10 points that we talk about.

And wonderfully, in many of the candidates' first-time-ever policy positions, they reflect a number of these things. So we're seeing some effect in the presidential campaigns that I hope will trickle into the new administration. And in this, one of the recommendations that we now make is that it is time to appoint a senior-level administration official or cabinet officer for arts and cultural policy coordination, guiding initiatives from federal agencies responsible for tourism, education, economic development, intellectual property policy, broadband, et cetera.

So we've drunk the Kool-Aid – (laughter). And now let me say that –

MS. STEENLAND: Tasted good.

MR. LYNCH: Let me say that there's a couple of reasons for that. One, it's not just a great idea because I have all the fears that were talked about already of too much government control, and an agency doing even more damage than has been done. But the essential argument in the center of the book that Bill makes is that it probably couldn't get much worse than it is now. (Laughter.) So let's give something else a try and so we're not saying, "Do it." We're actually saying, "Explore it." Think of – because you, yourself, in the book give three or four different options about the way that that could go, but I think it –

MR. IVEY: Yes, I have fall-back positions.

MS. STEENLAND: If you don't like this –

REP. COOPER: Well, as much as I love Bill, I'm a tougher sell on this. Let's get real on the politics, folks. With the culture wars and with the endangered species status of the NEA itself, it's a little ambitious to talk about something much greater, when we haven't even ensured the survival of the NEA. Now, I give Bill great personal credit. When he took over, it did face extinction. And it's a tribute to his personal skills and his intellectual ability to get warring parties together and to live peaceably, and to get a boost in funding because that was unthinkable when Bill took over.

We still have a long way to go and I think when you want the bigger cure, the first thing you should focus on is a diagnosis because people don't want to hear a cure unless they are convinced of the diagnosis. So I would focus on that part of the book. Let's figure out what the problems are. Let's establish some sort of consensus on those and then let's see what the best cure is. And a little marketing advice: the best sales pitch

isn't "Well, it can't get any worse, so let's try" – (laughter). I would try more a positive spin.

MR. LYNCH: It worked with me, but not necessarily the public.

MR. IVEY: I talk about the fact that when I was NEA chairman, my work was connected with the administration through the east wing of the White House, not the west wing. I was attached basically to the Social Office and the First Lady's Office, which I took to be a strong indication on a bipartisan basis – it's never been different in another administration – that the arts and culture are seen as a very soft policy arena. And I think one of the challenges is to harden it up.

I would be happy to just see, at some point, a dedicated person within the National Security Council and a dedicated person within the Domestic Policy Council who had a cultural portfolio, so that when those entities met, someone would say, "Here's something that's happening in the cultural scene that either is being affected by what we're doing or can affect – can help what we're trying to accomplish." And I think that very small step would be – could be helpful, but I agree with the congressman. I think that to understand the problem is the first challenge.

MR. LYNCH: One thing that I'd just add to it, and in the book, there's a lot of illustrations about something that I think of, and another author wrote about, called local genius – the concept of great things that are going on out there in Nashville, or in other cities across the country, in rural areas, and they're going on without a lot of help. They're happening because of the joy and the passion and the creative innovation of the people there.

And one of the things that I think – no matter what we have at the federal level – just simply bigger investing at the local level in self-empowerment is one of the great keys. I think for myself – I've been privileged to be in all kinds of wonderful symphonic settings and the great museums, but the greatest artistic experiences I've ever had have been singing three-part harmony at two o'clock in the morning in a bar band or being at a great festival. I had the opportunity to actually be at Woodstock and experience that and things like that – (Laughter.)

REP. COOPER: I'm impressed.

MR. LYNCH: – things like that that are about the spirit, as well as the art, are not things that come about because of a federal grant. They come about because you've invested locally and you've seen local empowerment take its own route and go its own direction. And that's also a way to ensure some of the originality that you say in the book you are sad to see us losing in America.

MR. IVEY: I really think an investment in cultural vitality as a public good in a democracy, particularly in what I would call a post-consumer's democracy, is a really good progressive issue. For one thing, it's not an issue where it's, "He said; she said."

It's not as though conservatives have an opposite position on cultural vitality. They don't have a position. It's an area that really hasn't been charted.

And I think as we look at our economy, and we look at an aging population, I think this is a country that's going to have to find new ways to define quality of life, without just thinking it's about the next car, the next – certainly not the next house. And I think that – and engaging with the kind of creativity Bob is talking about, can be a real public policy objective. But there are several bridges that have to be crossed. Hardcore policy wonks get uncomfortable when you talk about art and culture. It seems too squishy to them, when actually, it's one of the harder, most meaningful policy arenas around.

REP. COOPER: One of the best quotes in his book is from John F. Kennedy, when he says, "Our quest should not be to just add years to our lives, but life to our years." Anybody who's visited a senior center knows that one of the most happy parts of the center is where they do arts and crafts and stuff. They express themselves. It may be pottery; it may be painting; it may be knitting or stitching or something. It's amazing. It brings people together. So there's so much to do there. We can harden it. We can make it more of a public policy issue.

MR. IVEY: We appreciate the fact that Bob Dylan at 64 or 65 is out there playing 200 dates a year, and there aren't very many human activities in which you can still be deeply meaningfully engaged that late in life. And he's clearly fully engaged and I expect he'll stay that way. And there are so many anecdotes of senior artists who operate at a high level late into life that there's got to be something there.

MS. STEENLAND: I have one more question for our panelists and then we'll go to the audience, so please get your questions ready.

Bill, you were talking about the environmental movement as maybe a model for a cultural movement and the environmental movement seeks to protect our physical space, but there is a cultural space. There is a cultural environment that may be intangible, but that's just as important to preserve and protect.

I imagine that the impetus for the EPA and environmental legislation might have come after Earth Day, when there was a huge public push, public awareness, public concern because these things at the federal level do not happen in a vacuum. There's a public push for that.

And so I'm wondering how we get there and are we there? And it's just a matter of connecting the dots and there is this vibrancy out there and we need to know about each other and form a movement, or you also talk in your book about how we really are consumers of culture more these days than we used to be. We don't make things – we're not creators in the same way. Do we have to get back to that? Is that happening? And how do we – the public – how do all of us out there value that, so that there's a push so that things can happen that you're talking about?

MR. IVEY: You're absolutely right about the fact that we've tended to become consumers of culture, rather than makers of art and I think technology in the early 20th century made that all too easy. When film and radio and the player piano and all these things invaded, all of a sudden, the specialists were elevated, the artists, and everybody else sort of stepped back and just started paying a fee.

So I think there's more distance to go than there would have been for, say, the environmental movement in the early or middle 1960s, when it was really getting itself organized – obviously, clean air, clean water, public good with a lot of consensus around their importance, and it's a great starting point.

I think that culture tends to be a less widely supported kind of good in society, but that doesn't mean that we can't get where we need to go, and I think that there are a number of things happening kind of simultaneously that I think will lead us in the right direction. One is that serious brain researchers, neuroscientists, are looking at what art really does to us when we engage in it, when we actually make it.

And then there are social scientists who are looking seriously at the question of happiness and a high quality of life. It's pretty common knowledge that Americans are no happier than we were in the mid-1970s; in fact, we're slightly less happy, even though we have a lot more money. So they're questioning the underpinnings of our current definition of happiness and I think art for them is beginning to play a role. And I think as those – as experts bring evidence to the table, we will begin to build a policy environment that can allow us to engage culture in a way.

But to go back to what Congressman Cooper said at the beginning, I don't think that should stop us from seeing how out of whack things have become and how far the marketplace has used regulation and legislation, and even the courts, to pull our culture away from public purposes.

If you look at your cultural consumption bill for a month now with legal downloads, with an XM Satellite subscription, with rental of movies, you'll find that it's amazingly – and this is simply because the cultural industries have found ways to attack a toll at every point of consumption. And fair use for an artist who wants to rework creativity from the past into something new, fair use is now that big, where it used to be that big. Now, you have to license and pay for any little use of material.

I was talking to an artist this morning who makes art by clipping advertising and pasting it up and he has come to realize that that's now illegal. He should license the use of every brand name that goes into one of his collages.

So I think dealing with negatives, the problems, would be a great place to start.

MR. LYNCH: I was wondering how many people in the audience actually informally sing in a chorus or choir or something like that. Would you just raise your

hands? And if you keep your hands up, how many people in the audience do anything musical with an instrument at home, play the piano – would you keep your hands up? And how many people in the audience do anything with sketching or painting or watercolors or whatever? That's just about every hand in the audience.

And so what I want to say is that I think that there's a lot more returning to culture as part of our lives, the great unincorporated part of this that I was talking about before. And I think it's really important for us to know that – it's what I was talking about before, the invisibility of all of those hands that just went up. We don't know it, but it's there. And I think that one of the things that I learned about – from the environmental movement – and we had that seminar yesterday too, and we want to keep learning – is that as we move forward with policy, there's two sides to the discussion.

There's this wonderful side, which is dialogue, ideas, research, policy. And then there's the other side, which we've entered into at Americans for the Arts in our Action Fund, which is the advocacy and the lobbying and the political action committee and the 100,000 people that we have on Capwiz, so that we can get messages to Congress overnight, and we're moving toward a million people. And so you need to have the ideas and then, in order to play in today's political arena, we need to take the reality of what we see here in this room, what we inherently know, and bring it to the decision-makers, whoever they are – federal, state, local, public, private – to actually get the kinds of things that Bill talks about in the book into policy.

MS. STEENLAND: All right. So we are glad to take questions from you. We ask that you keep your questions brief and succinct. And when the mike comes to you, please tell us who you are and if you have an affiliation. Yes, the woman right there.

Q: (Inaudible) – I'm a retired nurse who believes that the arts help children and adults figure out who they are, not just make us more interesting to talk about things. I'd like anyone, or all of you, to respond to the arts with the big "C" and the little "c," a new concept for me, and how that can bring us toward a more peaceful world by getting countries together with exchange, instead of all this bombing business.

MR. LYNCH: Well, I'll start. Bill talks about that in the book extensively and I think very well. And what he points out – and I think all of our experience is that when cultural diplomacy, when artistic exchange, when investing in learning about other cultures, or other cultures learning the real things about us, not just what we export – when those things happen, we learn from one another and things get better. It's not always the case, but it's a pretty good investment.

And what we don't have, I think – I know – are good policies that act on that from a funding point of view. So we have seen restricted visas, which we have as an issue to work on and we have seen far less money invested in those kinds of exchanges. And it has to do, I think – in my conversations with people in the Democratic leadership, for example – has to do with the tiny amount of money that we actually have to work with in the budget, the federal budget right now.

Our issue is not just a cultural issue; it's an arts issue. Our issue is to understand that if we want the life and the society that we're talking about here, we have to actually pay a little more for it. And so getting it into policy is one thing, and then getting the money there to fund it is another, but the roadmap is obvious and it has been for 2,000 years.

MR. IVEY: Well, obviously, we have a huge foreign policy problem that's beyond the ability of art and culture to solve right now. That said, there's a concept – and a friend who's familiar with cultural diplomacy work in the United Kingdom and in Europe, he said there's a concept that's going around. I haven't been able to find it, to follow-up on it. It's not as widespread as he said it was, but it's something called mutuality. So we're not talking about diplomacy so much as we are mutuality.

And the idea is in a time when the international issues may be so intractable that you can't solve them through the kind of diplomatic “Oh, I'll do this for you and you do this for me,” the normal exchange of diplomacy, you fall back mutuality, which is “Let's find the things that we can agree on that are overarching concerns,” the wellbeing of children, for example, or shared art and culture. And I think culture does become an opportunity to advance mutuality, perhaps in a period that we hope is going to be short, in which regular diplomacy is very difficult.

So I think the arts have a unique role, not so powerful a role that we can say that if everyone in the world were to sing together, there'd be no more war. I never wanted to go there, as they say, but I do think that there are unique opportunities around culture that the real hardcore international policy people should take more seriously than they do now.

MR. LYNCH: And one thing that you just reminded me of, my mother is a retired nurse, 85 years old, and she's having a great time as an amateur painter right now, but because of the war and the economy, I guess, she keeps getting letters from the United States Navy trying to recruit her. (Laughter.) And she wants to know, Congressman, if you could help us. (Laughter.)

REP. COOPER: We probably need her skills.

MS. STEENLAND: Yes, the gentleman right there, yes.

Q: I'm John Craig. I'm an addictions counselor in Virginia (in our?) health system. There are these books out like "The Republican Noise Machine" that describe the Right-wing messaging organizations that are highly coordinated and generate a tremendous number of very Right-wing messages that are coordinated and disseminated throughout our society.

Anyone who grew up in the 1960s, and everybody else as well, knows that back to Nashville with popular music or the British invasion or whatever, there was just this

huge outpouring of creativity not coordinated and paid for by anyone, but just spontaneous from artists with very liberal messages and the songs were so good. They're being played for 40 years and even though we can't stand to listen to them sometimes anymore, we still do because they're great, great songs.

I'm just wondering – certainly there's been continued creativity through the 80s, 90s, and now, but it seems like there's not as much like the songs – like when the Iraq war comes along, it just doesn't seem like you've got someone like Bob Dylan, "With God on Our Side," or some of these extraordinary songs. They either are not there or they're not getting the widespread dissemination. And I know this is a very complicated question, but maybe you could speak to that a little bit.

MR. IVEY: I love that question because I do think that the art system – that in a sense, the lack of vibrancy or vitality in what we hear on the radio or see on television is in part a symptom of the systemic problems that Congressman Cooper was talking about in his opening remarks.

After the 1996 Telecom Act was passed, it was possible for one company – and I use the example in my book – Clear Channel Communications, a Texas company, that rolled up more than 1,000 radio stations and they developed policies in terms of how they programmed. It's not so much that they do central programming, but they attack a single demographic. If you're a country radio station, you're only allowed to format records that appeal to women 36 to 55.

Now, that decision on the part of Clear Channel flows all the way back – and I have literally seen this. It flows all the way back into the room where songwriters are working and they'll say, "Hey, that's a great song, man, but you know, Clear Channel's never going to play that. Move on."

And when people listen to the radio and they say, "That's a little boring, the different voices." We don't have the Johnny Cashes or the new Bruce Springsteen, or these quirky, eccentric – the Bob Dylan as he was in the 1960s when he first signed by Columbia. You don't have those kinds of people. Well, why is that? Well, we're not as creative as we used to be. In fact, the opposite is probably true. I think we are as creative, but the gatekeepers, the system, the decisions that get made – if you're a record company, you're now going to be a division of a multinational corporation. It's a public corporation. You're going to have monthly, or at least quarterly, price – stock price targets. You're going to be asked every month – your division to report on that.

You can't go to that system and say, "I've got this weird character. I think if we work with her for a year or two, maybe we might get something happening." You've got to have something right now. So instead, you come and say, "Well, you know Norah Jones? We've got somebody just like her. We've got the new Norah Jones. She's a young woman with a little university training and an interesting background, kind of a little jazz feeling. She plays the piano and sings. Isn't that something?" And so all of a sudden, you listen to the radio. Gosh, that sounds like kind of a third-rate Norah Jones.

And the reason it gets there is because that's the way for people to operate in the system we have now. It simply is not a system that generates creativity.

Now, it's true. Boutique little record labels are coming in underneath the behemoths, but they don't have access to mainstream media. So what you tend to get is a very, very homogenized product. And I think if you look at movies that imitate old blockbusters, or if you look at the next reality TV show, you start to see that the system has begun to favor not creativity, but imitation and reputation because imitation and reputation gives you deniability. How – it didn't work? We had the same team that made the "Titanic." Well, how could it not work? Well, it's just another boat, another sinking, but it didn't work as well. And – but it gives everybody deniability and I think that is a – it's an artistically, creatively corrupting part of our current system.

MR. LYNCH: I just want to add to that, though, that I agree with everything that Bill said. Primarily, though, what he's talking about is distribution and that shouldn't be confused with is interesting, creative, artistic stuff happening out there?

And when I was in high school, what I did was form a rock-and-roll band and it was probably one of the greatest, fun things I ever did and my retirement goal is to get the band back together and come to Nashville. (Laughter.)

But what's important to realize is that there's a lot of things like that that are happening that just, as you were pointing out, they're sort of maybe amateur, maybe underground, maybe just for fun. But take that away, take music away entirely, there's three million kids out there – and I think it's even a bigger number right now – three million kids according to MIT research that take game technology – you see the kids doing games – and they're using game technology to make their own movies about the war and about other issues, just like the folk singers did back in the '60s. And that's just one example of an art form that nobody sees. It's underground; it's shared among kids of a certain age and there's tons of other stuff like that.

So I think that recognizing – again, I go to the nurturing local genius aspect of things, as well as the national distribution and the bigger picture together I think will help assure the kind of culture that we want.

MR. IVEY: I did not want to give the impression that I sense any lack of creativity in the society. If anything, it's the opposite. It's that the mechanisms for that creativity, feeding itself into the cultural commons, has been greatly diminished over the last 20 or 30 years and the non-profits are troubled too.

MS. STEENLAND: We will take one more quick question and then we're going to have to close. Can we go maybe further to the back of the room, the gentleman in the white shirt? Yes, right there.

Q: I'm Jeff Rush (sp). I work for the Congressman Phil Hare. I was wondering if you could talk a little about arts in the classroom and how that affects students and student success in learning.

MR. LYNCH: Well, actually, I think – there are some things in Bill's book that I don't exactly agree with.

MR. IVEY: Oh, no – (laughter) –

MR. LYNCH: But I think that he actually often gives both sides of the same picture in the book, so I'm not sure he disagrees with what I'm about to say as well, but I think that arts in the classroom is the great unrecognized secret weapon of America advancement. I think that we have enough information, despite certain research reports that come out now and then from impressive places like Harvard.

I think we have enough research to show that art in the classroom, on a really serious basis, multiple forms, enough, maybe four times a week, dramatically affects everything in that child's life: grades, attitude, the ability to communicate, the ability to go out and get into another college or get a job, the ability to be creative, which is creativity and innovation – at the top of the list of what the American business community, according to the Conference Board, is now looking for in the 21st century American worker.

And for kids that have been academically challenged or what used to be called "kids at risk," the data is very clear that extensive exposure to the arts, recidivism rates go down, their ability to do better in society than they had when they were thrown out of school – all that data is there.

And so I think that we have a lot of work to do to change that around, starting with some kind of a re-tweaking of the No Child Left Behind Act which, with good intentions, sends the wrong signal to local decision-makers about how they should spend their money. And I think that we can make a big difference with some modest re-looking at the arts in education.

REP. COOPER: Three-word answer: "Mr. Holland's Opus." (Laughter.)

MS. STEENLAND: I want to thank you all for coming today. I want to thank our panelists. And Bill will be signing copies of his book for those of you who would like to talk to him and talk to the others. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

(END)