

John Cariani
Bronx, NY (from Presque Isle)

Hello. John Cariani, here. I am an actor and a playwright and I grew up in Presque Isle and now live in New York City. I would like to support this bill because the arts offer a way into new worlds, new ways of thinking, and new ideas. And when we tackle what's new, we become less afraid of the other. And we're all very afraid of each other right now. The pandemic has pushed us all apart--physically and ideologically. We've been made painfully aware of how divided we are. Every day on the news we hear about the urban/rural divide; the red state/blue state divide; racial divides. We're all told that we don't get along. And that we're all so different. But we're all more alike than we're willing to admit. The arts remind us of that--that we're all human beings, seeking connection, seeking solace, seeking understanding. Theatre and live music and visual art bring us together and tell us stories about ourselves. And remind us of the common ground we share. And we need to be reminded that there's a lot more common ground than uncommon ground right now. I think—after a year-plus of being apart, we're entering a moment that I like to call "The Great Coming Together." Funding for arts organizations will help facilitate this great "Coming Together." And it will make the State of Maine—and the country—stronger.