

# PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER

2301 East Franklin Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55406

February 15, 2023

Dear Senate Capital Investment Committee,

RE: Increased Investment is Needed in SF 676 & SF 677 for Minnesota's Arts Community

On behalf of the Playwrights' Center, we request that as you approach final negotiations with the House and Governor, you consider inclusion of projects that support our arts community in the state of Minnesota. As countless Minnesotans have been impacted by this pandemic, the arts community and the thousands of individual artists who call Minnesota home have been especially hard hit. It has never been more urgent to invest in organizations that support artists' livelihoods and their creative methods.

The Playwrights' Center is requesting \$5.65 million in state investment in 2023 of the total \$19 million in order to begin construction on our building project this year. State support is critical for our ability to provide programming to our artists. We have raised matching funds including Federal funding, but state investment is necessary for the project. We know everyone is aware of the impact of inflation on project costs, but to put it in very specific terms: Playwrights' Center is seeing hard cost increases in the neighborhood of 1% per month we delay starting construction. For Playwrights' Center, and the artists we support, that means the difference between locking in prices in March rather than May (or beyond) is more than \$300,000. With interest rates on construction financing continuing to rise, that number goes even higher. Those are dollars literally going to banks instead of the diverse storytellers Playwrights' Center supports.

Every one of those dollars matter. At the Playwrights' Center we are lifting up new stories and voices intentionally to change the landscape of American Theater. Plays by writers of color and indigenous writers represent 15% of plays produced in the US. Over 48% of our most deeply supported playwrights identify as indigenous, trans or persons of color. And truly, lifting those voices, and supporting those stories change much more than the American Theater. They change the narratives we share about who we are and how we live. They don't just make plays better. They make communities better. They make Minnesota better.

We are grateful to be included as a nonprofit partner by the City of St. Paul and are thankful for the warm embrace we have received from our future neighbors. The Playwrights' Center is ready to move forward with our project and the purchasing of our site this year. This new building will create more jobs in the state of Minnesota and empower countless artists to create and share stories in our community. As SF 676 & SF 677 moves through the legislative process, we hope you consider this important investment.

Sincerely,



Robert Chelimsky  
*Managing Director*