



STEVEN M. FULOP  
MAYOR OF JERSEY CITY

## CITY OF JERSEY CITY OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY HALL | 280 GROVE STREET | JERSEY CITY, NJ 07302  
P: 201 547 5500 | F: 201 547 5442



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**Contact: Hannah Peterson**

M: 732-881-1209

E: HPeterson@jcnj.org

### ***Mayor Steven M. Fulop and State Legislators Push for Creation of Dedicated Arts and Culture Fund***

***Assembly and Senate Bills Aim to Authorize Municipalities to Adopt an Ordinance Establishing Annual Tax Levy Dedicated to an Arts and Culture Trust Fund***

JERSEY CITY – Today, **Mayor Steven M. Fulop**, **Senator Joe Cryan**, **Assemblywoman Angela V. McKnight**, and **Assemblyman Raj Mukherji** announce the introduction of a bill to both Houses of the New Jersey Legislature which will allow municipalities to adopt an ordinance establishing an annual tax levy to be dedicated to local arts and culture funding, which would be deposited into an Arts and Culture Trust Fund. The proposed bill requires that the tax levy be approved by voters as a public question in a general or special election.

“We have worked to encourage the continued growth of our arts and culture community in Jersey City, and know that our City has become the unique and vibrant place it is today thanks to the work of local artists and art organizations,” said Mayor Fulop. “This bill will allow residents to choose whether they want to see a sustainable source for arts funding in Jersey City, so that we can continue to work with these organizations to bring art, music, dance, film and culture into all neighborhoods.”

The Arts and Culture Trust Fund bill is modeled after the Open Space Trust Fund bill that became law in New Jersey in 1997, allowing municipalities to adopt an ordinance through public question which would dedicate tax revenue to the preservation or creation of open space. In 2016, Mayor Steven Fulop and the Jersey City Council presented this option to voters in the form of a referendum, and received an overwhelming approval for the creation of this dedicated funding source. The Jersey City Open Space Trust Fund levies \$0.005 per household per year, and has collected \$622,999.76 in 2017.

“Providing the tools necessary for municipalities throughout New Jersey to create sustainable revenue sources for important initiatives, whether they be related to arts and culture or open space preservation, is something I value as a legislator,” said Senator Cryan of LD20. “The Arts and Culture Trust Fund will allow cities and towns across the state to invest in the arts in ways they may have not had an opportunity to before, and I am excited to help encourage the growth of these communities through this bill.”

Once the Arts and Culture Trust Fund bill becomes law, Jersey City plans to place the public question on the ballot this November.

“Jersey City has galleries and arts districts with live-work zoning and an infrastructure that could help incubate legends,” said State Assemblyman Raj Mukherji, who serves as Majority Whip of the Assembly. “But without a dedicated and recurring funding source, we will never reach our potential. That’s why it’s my privilege to work with the Mayor to allow voters the choice of creating a municipal levy for an arts and culture trust fund. We will make this bill a law, and it will serve as a model for the nation.”

Jersey City is home to a number of artists and creative organizations that have made the arts a defining feature of the City’s culture. This community came together in 2016 to form the Jersey City Arts Council with the support of the Fulop Administration, and has served as a driving force for the development of this bill. The Arts Council aims to protect, strengthen, and promote the arts in Jersey City, and has served as an advocate for the growth in arts and culture programming citywide.

“The arts provide the most inclusive, diverse and enriching elements in any society, and a public/private partnership is crucial to allowing the arts to thrive, as neither side can do it alone,” said Robinson Holloway, chair of the Jersey City Arts Council. “This bill will be transformative for the arts in Jersey City, and throughout the state of New Jersey. We appreciate the leadership of Senator Joe Cryan, Assemblyman Raj Mukherji, Assemblywoman Angela McKnight, and Mayor Steve Fulop, and we look forward to asking the community to affirm their support for the arts in a referendum.”

In addition to the Jersey City Arts Council, New Jersey City University is home to the Arts Advisory Board which has taken a leadership role in shaping the cultural landscape of the arts in Jersey City and the region.

“Jersey City has a long and storied history of standing at the forefront of arts and culture,” said Dr. Henderson, President of New Jersey City University. “The University continues to make key investments and develop strategic partnerships to fortify the arts in Jersey City, including its redevelopment of University Place, which will feature a state-of-the-art venue for the performing arts and a physical space for NJCU's Center for the Arts, which houses visual, performing and literary arts programming. We believe strongly in the importance of a dedicated revenue source designed to ensure the ongoing development of an already burgeoning arts and culture scene, as this will help to secure a sustained and robust presence for years to come.”

“The arts are an integral part of our community. Everyday we are surrounded by art and use it on a continual basis,” said Assemblywoman Angela V. McKnight. “By enhancing our communities with art, we will gain a better understanding of our different cultures and traditions, while providing a means of expression to many. With this bill New Jersey, especially Jersey City, will be able to add to our ever growing rich history.”

The Fulop Administration has continued to support the growth of arts and culture through numerous art fairs, flag raisings, local theater performances, and the Jersey City Mural Arts Program. Additionally, every Fall, the City hosts the Jersey City Arts and Studio Tour, a showcase of the arts which features nearly 1,000 participating artists in hundreds of venues that include private studios, galleries, local businesses, and pop-up and public spaces in every neighborhood. For more information on arts and culture events in Jersey City, please visit <http://jerseycityculture.org/>.

**All media inquiries should be directed to Hannah Peterson at [HPeterson@jcnj.org](mailto:HPeterson@jcnj.org) or 732-881-1209.**