

My friends,

We have a very narrow window of opportunity to have our voices heard in DC for a national project that is historical, educational and patriotic but we need to work together VERY quickly.

Last Wednesday, the National Music Educators Association (MENC) flew me out to Washington DC to speak with Ohio Congresspeople that sit on the Committee of Appropriations to ask for a special appropriation for FY2008 in the amount of \$2.9 million dollars. This money will be used to create and disseminate a standards-based national anthem curriculum kit to be distributed to **every public school** in the nation as a lasting legacy to ensure every child learns our national anthem. It will teach the history, words and music to our beloved Star Spangled Banner.

This is where I need your immediate help if you feel passionate about this cause. Congress is working on the budget **RIGHT NOW** and they will have to have their numbers turned in by next week (the last the 15th). Congresspeople will only listen to the people within their district even though this is a national project. I am humbly urging everyone I know to call, email or fax a letter to their congress people voicing their personal stories of support for the importance of teaching the national anthem to our young people. Do not mail a letter as they will not receive them in time. Because time is of the essence, first phone. Then fax a letter and finally email. This is a networking project. Even though your Congressperson may not be on the appropriations committee, THEY ARE ALL CONNECTED. Ask them to reach out to their fellow legislators and support this effort. Also contact your senators.

I have attached the letter I sent to my Congressman as a sample. Use your own words and speak from the heart but the important information is that it is a **special \$2.9 million set aside appropriation for the year 2008 from the Labor, HHS and Education subcommittee for the National Anthem Project legacy school kits.**

Email everyone you know **across the country** to phone and email Congress. Congressman Obey of Wisconsin is the Chairperson of the Labor, HHS and Education Subcommittee that will decide this budget. If any of you know him or are in his district, please contact him. Those of you in Ohio, I have listed the key Ohio appropriators to contact. If you do not know who your Congressperson is, I have include the web address <http://www.house.gov/writerep/> for you. All you do is type in your zip code and it will tell you who your rep is. Once you know who your rep is, you can search that representative's name on the www.house.gov website and their contact info will come up.

I deeply appreciate your help and support in any capacity. Writing editorial in your local papers listing the phone numbers of your congress people will also get their attention.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Shappert

Dear Congressman Hobson,

As you are heading into appropriation hearings, I would like to once again voice my support for the special appropriations request from the Labor-HHS and Education Subcommittee in the amount of \$2.9 million dollars that the MENC is seeking to fund the legacy kits for the National Anthem Project. Last year I did assemblies for 5000 students in 31 schools in our district teaching the history and the words to our national anthem. Because of the budget cuts, music teachers do not have the time nor the tools to teach our nation's patriotic songs. I knew this was a huge problem when I asked the question, "who wrote the words to our national anthem" and the response I got was "Alisha Keyes". My mouth about hit the floor. We have a whole generation of people that are so in tune with the pop culture that our nation's heritage and respect for our forefathers and veterans is fading.

And it isn't just the children. At first when I heard the Harris Poll that two-thirds of Americans do not know the song title or words, I thought that couldn't possibly be correct. But after giving 120 thirty-minute presentations last year to over 12,000 people in the Buckeye State, I have seen and HEARD first hand that people do not know the Star Spangled Banner.

As mayor of Commercial Point in Pickaway County, just miles south of Rickenbacker, I understand all the requests public servants receive for appropriations. I also understand that most of the time, the money we appropriate has a temporal effect on problems.

This national project is different. With the \$2.9 million dollars, every public school in America will receive a standards-based national anthem curriculum kit that will teach the words, music and history to the national anthem. This will ensure that our music teachers will have the tools they need to make sure the next generations of leaders do not forget one of our most important national symbols.

I thank you for your time and humbly ask that you use your influence to help make this project a reality and to ensure a lasting legacy to our nation's schoolchildren.

Sincerely,

Mayor Rhonda Shappert
Mrs. Ohio America 2005

<http://www.house.gov/writerep/>
Committee on Appropriations
Labor, HHS, Education

Congressman Dave Hobson Ph #202-225-4324 <http://www.house.gov/hobson/formmail.htm>
Congressman Ralph Regula Ph # 202-225-3876 <http://wwwc.house.gov/regula/zipauth.htm>
Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur Ph# 202-225-4146 <http://kaptur.house.gov/Library/contact.aspx>
Congressman John Boehner Ph#202-225-6205 <http://johnboehner.house.gov/contact.asp>
Congressman Tim Ryan Ph#202-225-5261 <http://timryan.house.gov>
Congressman Dave Obey (WI) Ph#202-225-3365 <http://obey.house.gov/hor/wi07/>

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