

We're Obama and Olbermann, O'Reilly and Ohio Plumbers—and we all support this message!

(Hypothetically—at least CENTERSTAGE thinks they should!)

For voters of every political persuasion—even the promised, improbably post-partisan—the 2008 election has renewed interest in government in unprecedented ways. But now that November's dust of democracy has settled, many enthusiastically engaged citizens are experiencing a momentum meltdown, missing the 538 hourly e-mail entreaties from MoveOn.org, or perhaps the moose stew recipes sent via Russian air space from the John Birch Society's Wasilla chapter.

So what to do with all of this restless civic energy? Become an Arts Advocate!

Take action to let public officials know how important the arts are to you and to the health of our communities. It's easier than you might think—and it works. In this dizzying media age of instant sound bytes and online polls, politicians are accountable to voters in new ways, and in real time. As a member of this empowered e-electorate, your voice can continue to make a difference, even after votes have been counted. (Except in Minnesota, where they are probably still counting, and Illinois, where everyone is under arrest....)



CENTERSTAGE, like most leading nonprofit arts organizations, relies on the support of local, state, and federal funding sources to sustain the world-class art and unique educational and community programming that has made us the State Theater of Maryland—and to ensure this work stays affordable and accessible for all. Our public support remains strong, but we are not immune to the effects of the ongoing economic crisis, consequent revenue shortfalls, and shrinking budgets. Now more than ever our elected officials need to hear directly from their constituents that the arts must remain a public priority. Not just as a critical investment in our shared quality of life, but also as smart fiscal policy. A thriving arts community strengthens our economy by creating jobs, supporting local businesses, and developing vital neighborhoods. According to the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development:

- *Every \$1 taxpayers spend on producing and presenting a show at CENTERSTAGE—or another performance by our arts colleagues—generates \$2.13 in goods and services for Maryland's economy.*

- *Maryland arts audiences spent over \$550 million at local businesses during their 2007 visits, with a total impact to the state's economy of \$1.2 billion.*
- *Arts organizations help generate over \$40 million in state and local taxes annually.*
- *Nonprofit arts organizations employ over 9,000 people in the Baltimore metropolitan area alone—over 15,000 statewide. That's not even counting the thousands of self-employed visual artists, dancers, musicians, or our colleagues in commercial theater.*

Here are two easy ways to get started:

- **Join Maryland Citizens for the Arts**, a network of thousands of arts lovers working to increase support of our state's arts community. MCA's online resources make it quick and convenient to stay informed and participate in arts advocacy online. Learn more at www.mdarts.org.
- **Visit www.centerstage.org** and sign up for CENTERSTAGE's eNewsletter mailing list. We'll keep you updated on public policy issues and advocacy opportunities specific to the theater's activities.

Use your informed voter voice—and your computer—to make a difference! Sign up online at home, or here at CENTERSTAGE by visiting the Arts Advocacy booth in our lobby before or after the show. Thanks for getting involved.