

## Leger Fernández advocates for art in appointment to IAIA board

Written by Staff Reports

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WASHINGTON D.C. — Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández, the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs, was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) by House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries on Dec. 14.

“Art provides a vital pathway to learn, discover, and appreciate culture, identity, and heritage,” Leger Fernández said. “My first visit to the IAIA was decades ago when it was in a small space in Santa Fe, doing big things. Now it occupies a vibrant campus with dormitories, film studios, graduate students, and inspiring spaces that inspire the artists that inspire all of us.”

The congresswoman’s commitment to the arts and Native communities is deeply rooted in her representation of New Mexico’s Third Congressional District, which includes Santa Fe, where IAIA’s campus is located. She emphasized the historical significance of indigenous art to the economic well-being of tribal communities in New Mexico, with one out of every ten paychecks in the state coming from the creative economy.

“I have worked hard to support the skilled Native creators who contribute to our arts economy,” she stated in a press release published Dec. 18. “Last year, I supported an increase of almost \$2 million of federal funding for IAIA from the previous year and Democrats have increased funding for IAIA every year we have been in the majority. I will continue to fight for robust federal funding for our education institutions.”

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