United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6175

August 18, 2026

President Donald J. Trump, Chairman
Ms. Jennifer Fischer, Vice Chair
Board of Trustees
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
2700 F Street NW
Washington, DC 20566s

Hon. Howard Lutnick
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Mr. Matthew K. Becker
Chief Executive Officer
BDO USA
8401 Greensboro Drive, Suite 800
McLean, VA 22102

Dear President Trump, Vice Chair Fischer, Secretary Lutnick, and Mr. Becker:

This letter reiterates the request I made during the August 13, 2026, annual meeting for the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees to be provided *pro forma* financial statements covering the two-year shutdown period and subsequent recovery. Please be sure that the statements include the six elements I requested in the meeting:

1. The scenario is a two-year shutdown with the REACH operational;
2. Revenue and operating expenses for two closed years and first year of recovery;
3. Assessment of risk of capital expenses exceeding projections, and potential range of added capital expenditures;
4. Assessment of artist/audience response to reopening, steps to improve desirability of venue, and revenue rebound;
5. Effects of the National Symphony Orchestra affiliation agreement on these Center *pro forma* financials; and
6. Any funding projected from a new endowment fund, including both amounts and dates.

These *pro forma* financial statements around the decision the Board made are basic due diligence and should have been provided before the vote—but they remain a requirement of ordinary board prudence, even if we are not “looking” until after we’ve “leapt.”

I believe it also remains basic due diligence for the Board to have a professional assess the damage the renaming did to the Center's reputation and finances, and assess the collapse of events, audiences, and revenue that ensued. That will bear on the Center's recovery post-shutdown.

Sincerely,

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Senate
Committee on Environment
& Public Works