

Arreon: Good afternoon and thank you to the Joint Finance Committee for this opportunity. We are here to advocate for increased funding for the Delaware Division of the Arts and to support organizations like Elevate Vocal Arts. I'm Arreon Harley-Emerson, CEO and Artistic Director.

Rachel: And I'm Rachel Clark, Executive Director. Elevate Vocal Arts serves constituents **statewide**, providing workforce development, education, and performance opportunities for Delawareans.

Arreon: Our work aligns with the CREATE plan, ensuring artists and educators can build here in Delaware. But the reality is - we have **more demand than we can meet**. We are **severely understaffed** and missing opportunities to innovate, like **developing a vocal recording program** where artists create vocal tracks for commercial use.

Rachel: This need is urgent. The University of Delaware has one of the largest **gaming development programs** in the country, yet there is no dedicated program for vocal artists to provide voice tracks. This is a lost economic opportunity for Delaware.

Arreon: Meanwhile, the shortage of music educators continues. We partner with the Department of Education to place artists in schools, but with more funding we could **serve more students and schools**.

Rachel: Our apprenticeship program already creates career pathways, and with additional investment we could expand programs like the **Delaware Academy of Vocal Arts**, providing career and technical education for high school students just like programs in STEM and the culinary arts.

Arreon: The impact is real. Take Ariel, a 25-year-old artist in Delaware. She completed our apprenticeship, joined Elevation Delaware's only professional choral sample, and now leads our school residency program, impacting 260 students this year alone.

Rachel: Ariel is thriving here because of arts funding. Increased support ensures more opportunities like hers - **more artists, more educators, more innovation, and more tax revenue supporting the important work of the state**.

Arreon: We know that you, like us, want Delaware to be a national leader in the creative economy. We look forward to working together to make that vision a reality.

Both:

Thank you