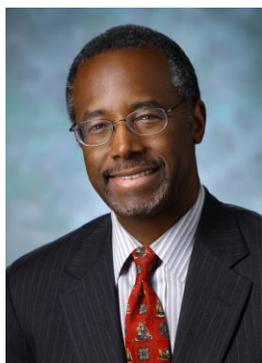




**To:** Arts Action Fund Members  
**From:** Americans for the Arts Action Fund  
**Date:** 8 September 2015  
**Re:** Ben Carson and the Arts\*

\*Note: Ben Carson suspended his Presidential campaign on 3/2/2016.

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**Name:** Ben Carson  
**Party:** Republican  
**Born:** 18 September, 1951 in Detroit, Michigan  
**Previous Public Offices Held:** None  
**Other Jobs Held:** Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins-1985-2013  
**Educational Background:** Johns Hopkins Hospital, Residency in Neurosurgery; M.D., University of Michigan; B.A. in Psychology, Yale



#### 2016 Presidential Campaign Information:

**Declaration Location:** Detroit, Michigan at Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts, May 4, 2015  
**Campaign Website:** <https://www.bencarson.com/>  
**Campaign Email:** <https://www.bencarson.com/contact/>  
**Headquarters Address:** Unlisted  
**Headquarters Phone:** Unlisted  
**Campaign Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/realbencarson>  
**Campaign Twitter:** [@RealBenCarson](https://twitter.com/RealBenCarson) 1.16 million followers

## Positions on the Arts

### Personal Arts Background

- Carson declared his candidacy for President at the Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts in Detroit, MI on May 4, 2015. Arts performances took place at the event, including a rendition of the national anthem featuring his wife, Candy Carson, playing the violin and a number of choirs singing contemporary and patriotic songs. Carson also sang at the end of his announcement with his wife. (Sources: [C-SPAN](#), [The Washington Post](#))
- One of the steps Carson's mother took to improve the chances of success for her children was regularly taking them to the library, having recognized that people who read a lot "*had the ability to change the direction of their lives,*" Carson said. (Source: [The Blaze](#))
- Carson's wife, Candy is a violinist and a pianist. She is involved in her local community orchestra and performs at the local hospital. (Source: [Carson Scholars](#))
- "*His wife and sons comprise the Carson Four, an accomplished string quartet.*" They performed in 2001 for the Baltimore Carson Scholars Awards Banquet, which featured Murray Carson, 17, B.J. Carson, 15, Rhoeyce Carson, 14, and their mom Candy Carson. (Sources: [Johns Hopkins Medicine](#), [Baltimore Sun](#))
- Carson is the writer of 4 bestselling books as well as a weekly opinion columnist at *The Washington Times* and founder of *American CurrentSee*, a monthly digital political journal geared towards African American conservatives. (Sources: [Amazon](#), [The Washington Times](#), [American CurrentSee](#))

### Notable Quotes

- "*One of the things that I used to do is, I used to love to memorize things. I memorized poems, memorized Bible verses,*" he said. "*And other people didn't know those things, and it began to make me feel that there was something special about me, and that I could learn things.*"- Ben Carson on his childhood during an interview with Kirk Cameron on the Glenn Beck Program (Source: [The Blaze](#))

### Policy Views on the Arts and Education

- Does not support federally mandated programs for education and opposes Common Core Education Standards. "*[Carson] has said that students who learn in home schools, private schools, or charter schools outperform those taught in traditional schools.*" (Source: [PBS](#))

### Examples of Actions on the Arts

- Founded the Carson Scholars Fund that "*supports two main initiatives: Carson Scholarships and the Ben Carson Reading project. Our scholarship program awards students who have embraced high levels of academic excellence and community service with \$1,000 college scholarships. The Ben Carson Reading Project provides funding to schools to build and maintain Ben Carson Reading Rooms - warm, inviting rooms where children can discover the joy of independent leisure reading. We award more than 500 scholarships annually. In total, we have awarded 4,800 scholarships across the country. Carson Scholarships winners have attended more than*

*300 colleges and universities and have received nearly \$2 million in scholarship funds to help finance their education.” (Source: America the Beautiful, by Ben Carson, page 210)*

- The Carson Scholarship Fund which is part of the Carson Scholars Fund provides funding for different initiatives, including college scholarships to students in grades 4-11. The requirements for being a scholar are achieving a certain level of academic excellence (at least 3.75 GPA) and participating in humanitarian related activities, and many of the scholars additionally participate in arts activities. (Source: [Carson Scholars](#))

## **Sample Advocacy Questions on the Arts**

- Walter Reed Hospital is doing groundbreaking work in incorporating the arts into patient care for wounded veterans. As a medical doctor, have you also seen first hand the healing power of the arts in patient care and speed of recovery?
- Dr. Carson, reading books and writing were two activities that had a particularly powerful influence on your successful rise from poverty. Do you believe arts education can help other children who are born into similarly dire economic straits ?
- Dr. Carson, you have said that as president you would significantly revise the tax code; would you protect the charitable tax deduction that keeps so many non-profit organizations, including arts organizations afloat?