

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pete Birchler of Marshall Music Advocates for Music Education in Washington, D.C.

Local business leader met with elected officials and national policy makers on importance of music education in the face of proposed budget cuts

LANSING, MI – JUNE 19, 2017 – Last month, Pete Birchler of Marshall Music joined nearly 100 music industry leaders, notable artists, and arts education activists to advocate for all school-aged children to have access to quality, comprehensive school music education programs. As part of the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Advocacy Fly-In held May 22-24, the delegation met with Members of Congress and other policy stakeholders to reinforce the importance of music as part of a well-rounded education. The issue of music education takes on a special importance this year as the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), readying for state-level implementation in 2018, currently faces underfunding. The law specifies music as core part of a well-rounded education for all K-12 students.



Pete Birchler (Director of School Service, Marshall Music), met with Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-MI-02) and eight other Michigan Congressional offices to discuss the importance of music education, and funding the *Every Student Succeeds Act* to its authorized levels

The Advocacy week began on Monday, May 22 with a Day of Service at Jefferson Middle School in Washington, D.C. Members from the group provided three hours of music education instruction on drum, ukulele and guitar for the middle school students. Birchler served on a team that provided assessment, maintenance and repair to many of the school's existing instruments. That evening, he joined The NAMM Foundation in awarding the SupportMusic Champion Award to Senator Robert Casey (PA). The award was presented in recognition of the Senator's long history in music education advocacy and role as a champion of the *Every Student Succeeds Act*.



On Tuesday, Birchler prepared for his efforts on Capitol Hill by participating in advocacy training at the [Newseum](#), during which he and fellow music industry leaders were apprised of current issues facing public school music programs and briefed on ESSA and the current political climate from a variety of policy and arts leaders, including representatives from the United States Department of Education, Americans for the Arts (AFTA), the National Governors Association (NGA), the National Association for Music Educators (NAfME), and the National School Board Association (NSBA), among others. The group enjoyed a special lunchtime session on current policy trends presented by PBS News Hour contributor and *New York Times* columnist David Brooks. Birchler was also trained on developing state-level advocacy efforts for music and arts education to put into practice in Michigan.

On Wednesday, May 24, Birchler met with nine Michigan Congressional offices, including Rep. Bill Huizenga, Rep. Jack Bergman, and Rep. Fred Upton, to advocate for funding school music programs across the nation, and to discuss the multitude of benefits music education espouses such as increased brain function, focus and language development as discussed in a [new research study](#) from Northwestern University. In addition to the advocacy work, Birchler was part of a special Congressional reception in the Mansfield Room at the U.S. Capitol that brought together arts advocates and policy makers. Former New York Yankees centerfielder and three-time World Series winner, music education champion, and Turnaround Arts artist Bernie Williams joined the day of advocacy, sharing his own experience in music education and a desire to create a more musical world.

To learn more about the event, or for interviews, please contact:

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To view additional images from Birchler's trip, please visit:

NAMM Day of Service at Jefferson Middle School Academy

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NAMM SupportMusic Champion Award, Senator Robert Casey

http://assignments.gettyimages.com/mm/nicePath/gyipa_public?nav=pr526739782

NAMM Fly-In for Music Education Briefing with David Brooks on 2017 National Political and Election Outlook

http://assignments.gettyimages.com/mm/nicePath/gyipa_public?nav=pr525499546

NAMM, VH1 and CMA Day of Music Education Advocacy Capitol Hill (May 24)

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NAMM, VH1, and CMA Capitol Hill Reception (May 24)

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About NAMM

The National Association of Music Merchants ([NAMM](http://www.namm.org)) is the not-for-profit association with a mission to strengthen the \$17 billion music products industry. NAMM is comprised of approximately 10,300 member companies located in 103 countries. NAMM events and members fund the [NAMM Foundation](http://www.namm.org)'s efforts to promote the pleasures and benefits of music, and advance active participation in music making across the lifespan. For more information about NAMM, please visit www.namm.org, call 800.767.NAMM (6266) or follow the organization on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/namm), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/namm) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/namm).

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