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STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY (SDC) WILL LAUNCH 'THE EMPOWER SERIES' WITH REMARKS FROM ANTHONY FOXX, DIRECTOR OF HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL'S CENTER FOR PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

(New York, October 22, 2026) – Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC) announces the launch of the **Empower Series**, a new initiative inspired by its commitment to **Unite, Empower, and Protect**. Designed to bring extraordinary leaders and thinkers into direct engagement with SDC Members, the series will launch at the Union's Annual Membership Meeting on November 16 with remarks from **Anthony Foxx, Director of Harvard Kennedy School's Center for Public Leadership, where he recently created the Culture and Civil Society Initiative**.

Foxx is the former U.S. Secretary of Transportation under President Obama and former Mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina. His work today examines the powerful role culture can play in strengthening civil society and bridging divides.

SDC Executive Director Laura Penn was introduced to Foxx in 2025 through her work representing SDC and other arts and entertainment unions in cultural policy initiatives. It was this work that created the opportunity for the Union to invite him to address the Membership.

Says SDC President Michael John Garcés, "Over the past decade, SDC has engaged in advocacy for its Members and the field, knowing that civic engagement is at the root of a civil society. Today, our solidarity and commitment to arts, culture, and organized labor are more important than ever. Through initiatives such as the Empower Series, SDC supports and amplifies the work of directors and choreographers as central artists whose talent, skill, and influence shape live performance in meaningful ways across the United States and around the world."

Future speakers for the Empower Series will include elected officials, representatives from the labor movement, and public policy strategists.

"We are all grappling, collectively and individually, with how larger forces are shaping our lives and our work," Penn says. "By introducing the Membership to big-picture, provocative thinkers who design policy beyond arts

and culture, we can offer perspectives from outside our field. We believe those perspectives will reinforce the power of SDC Members' work while inspiring new ways of thinking and connecting with our communities and the wider civic landscape."

SDC is the theatrical union that unites, empowers, and protects professional stage directors and choreographers throughout the United States. Our mission is to foster a national community of professional stage directors and choreographers by protecting the rights, health and livelihoods of all our Members; negotiating and enforcing employment agreements across a range of jurisdictions; facilitating the exchange of ideas, information, and opportunities; and educating current and future generations about the critical role of directors and choreographers in leading the field. SDCweb.org

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