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Senator Grassley

**Humanities Education**

**Question 1:** You agree that greater emphasis should be placed on humanities education at the secondary level or even earlier. How will your experience in secondary education help you carry out this mission in the NEH?

**Answer:**

I certainly do agree that we need more humanities instruction in the schools. We have been through a period when humanities study was seriously eroded at the primary and secondary levels of education. The teaching of history, languages, the arts, and the finest works of literature has been all but abandoned in some schools.

I am encouraged to believe that this erosion is finally being reversed. NEH has done fine work in this area, which has, I think, considerably helped the reform movement in national education. As you are aware, I have had twenty-five years of experience as a teacher and administrator in secondary schools. I know how learning takes place in the classroom and how things get accomplished in a school. As head of NEH, I would expect to make ample use of my knowledge of pre-collegiate education to restore substantive humanities study to its proper place in the basic educational experience that we provide for our youth.
Private Sector Support

Question 2: In view of the Administration's interest in promoting greater private sector involvement, how do you plan to encourage greater private sector involvement in the humanities through the challenge grant and other programs?

Answer: Stimulating private support for humanities institutions and individual humanities projects is a major interest of the Endowment. As a result of NEH matching grants and Challenge Grants, humanities scholars and humanities institutions are able to take their case for support directly to the public. Over the long term, the financial well-being of these projects and institutions will be better served by cultivating reliable private donors than by depending on the federal government.

I noticed that the amount of treasury matching funds requested by NEH for fiscal 1986 is higher than in recent years. My budget requests for the Endowment will continue that emphasis.
Senator Grassley

Administering NEH

Question 3: It might be said that your background in education has characterized you as more of a generalist than a specialist. How would you consider a "generalist" approach as an asset in administering the programs of the NEH?

Answer: Any administrator whose task it is to manage an organization of any size is forced to adopt a "generalist" approach. No one can know in detail all of what an organization does. Fortunately, the Endowment has many competent and dedicated professionals, including accomplished scholars and teachers in a variety of disciplines, whose business it is to master a particular aspect of the agency's function. I see the chairman's role as that of imparting coherence and direction to policy and administration and of orchestrating and superintending the work of others who are expert in a specific disciplinary area.
Politization of NEH

Question 4: The need to keep the Endowment from being politicized is key to maintaining the integrity of its program activities. What policies will you pursue, such as maintaining the use of the peer-review process, to avoid criticism in this regard?

Answer: NEH has the reputation throughout the humanities world for being fair, objective, and rigorous in determining which proposals are worthy of receiving support. As chairman, I intend to continue that honored tradition.

In my funding decisions, I will rely on the considered advice of both peer reviewers and the National Council on the Humanities. I can assure you that merit alone will remain the sole criterion for receiving a grant from NEH.
Senator Grassley

Elementary and Secondary Education

Question 5: The following statement is from the Report of the Commission on the Humanities:

"Although the record of NEH is commendable, we believe that the agency has neglected elementary and secondary education. With guidance from the National Council on the Humanities, the Endowment should clarify its policies of support in ways that transcend divisive ideological terms."

What are some appropriate ways you see for addressing this neglect?

Answer: Since the Commission on the Humanities released its report in 1980, NEH has undertaken a number of initiatives in support of elementary and secondary education. A new program, Summer Seminars for Secondary School Teachers, has been introduced to wide acclaim, and the programs of the Education division, including the Elementary and Secondary Education program, have been thoroughly reorganized. A considerably greater emphasis is now put on institutes and seminars which enable teachers to deepen their knowledge of the subjects they teach. Support has also been provided for efforts to establish a cooperative relationship between schools and nearby institutions of higher education. So, while it is certainly true that the humanities have been neglected in elementary and secondary education, I do not think that it can be said any longer that the Endowment has slighted this area.

As Chairman of NEH, I would continue the current emphasis on these and other efforts to improve humanities education at the primary and secondary level. In view of the urgency of the problems that confront the schools and given my extensive experience within them, I expect to find that there are additional ways that this agency could contribute to educational reform in this area.
Senator Grassley

Cooperation in Education

Question 6: Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation has pointed out that the higher education community needs to work with the elementary and secondary community to ensure educational achievement. He comments, "Universities pretend they can have quality without working with the schools, which are, in fact, the foundation of everything universities do."

As Chairman of the NEH, what could you do to promote greater cooperation and coordination among all levels of education to promote humanities scholarship and education?

Answer: I agree with Mr. Boyer that students in higher education build on the foundation of their elementary and secondary education. Not only undergraduate education but all subsequent study and scholarship in the humanities depend critically upon the quality of learning that takes place in the schools. I believe that deficiencies in education at the primary and secondary level could ultimately be translated into a decline in the vigor of the most advanced study in the humanities.

But a concern for the health of humanities scholarship isn't the only or even the main reason to improve elementary and secondary education. Our system of universal, compulsory education means that every citizen is affected at one time or another by what is taught in the schools. Primary and secondary education has an impact on everyone.

In recent years the level and quality of NEH efforts on behalf of primary and secondary education have been fully commensurate with their importance. NEH has sponsored teacher institutes and seminars at institutions of higher education and has assisted schools to undertake cooperative programs with local universities. The Central Disciplines program has provided financial support to colleges and universities seeking to strengthen admission standards and to introduce more rigorous course requirements. Both of these actions are likely to stimulate corresponding improvements in high school graduation requirements and course content.

In general, I like the thrust of what the Endowment has done. I fully expect to continue current NEH efforts of this sort or to institute others that are similar.