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Claiborne Pell

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ART AND THE CONCEPT OF LEISURE by SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL
(D-R. I.)

FRESS RELEASE

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Monday, May 4, 1964

The arts and leisure time and their meaningful relationship to each other for Americans was discussed in a talk by Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island at a convocation at the University of Rhode Island this afternoon. Greater free time presents great problems and challenges for us all in our changing society, he said.

Speaking on the anniversary of Rhode Island's Independence, the Senator said, "We are a free people in another way. We are entering an era when the whole concept of free leisure time is becoming increasingly important."

In many ways, he said, "Our goals are still before us. Abundance has not yet reached the whole country. As we continue toward our goals we must be sure we do not slide backward into stages of selfishness and apathy, of self-satisfied indifference."

The American spirit of enterprise has always been associated with hard work," he said. Contrasting working habits, he said at one time workers in the United States labored more than 80 hours a week, while today the working week is 40 hours or less.

As a result of newly acquired leisure, the Senator said we are seeing a burgeoning desire for cultural growth. But we can't depend any longer on private philanthropy to meet these demands, he said.

At hearings before a Special Subcommittee on the Arts which he chaired, the Senator told of witnesses emphasizing a cultural crisis.

He said that a bill to establish a National Council on the Arts and a National Arts Foundation has passed the Senate and is now in the House, which previously has been reluctant to support such legislation. The most comprehensive bill yet passed by a branch of the Congress, it is modest in appropriation, he said.

The Senator compared our present meager governmental efforts in the field of arts with those of some European nations, which have lower living standards, but spend double, triple, and even 30 times as much per capita as we would under the proposed legislation.

(SPEECH ATTACHED)