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Arts and Humanities: Pell Statement (January 27, 1976): Speech 01

Claiborne Pell

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FOR COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY SENATOR PELL

RE: ARTS AND HUMANITIES

In Response to Letter of January 27, 1976
From Chairman Williams
The National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities, established by P.L. 89-209 in 1965, has the following current levels of authorization: for the National Endowment for the Arts, $113.5 million in program funds; and for the National Endowment for the Humanities, $113.5 million in program funds. In addition, a ceiling of $25 million is authorized for matching gifts made to the two Endowments -- an amount which the two Endowments traditionally share equally and which is authorized under section 10(a)(2) of the basic act. In total, each Endowment is thus authorized for the present fiscal year $126 million -- $113.5 million, plus half of the $25 million authorized to match gifts ($113.5 million plus half of the $25 million, or $12.5 million equals $126 million). Administrative funds are traditionally authorized by a "such sums as may be necessary" provision. The current administrative costs are $11 million.

Current appropriations are as follows: for the Arts, a total of $82 million ($74.5 million in program funds and $7.5 million to match gifts made to the Arts Endowment); for the Humanities, a total of $79.5 million ($72 million in program funds and $7.5 million to match gifts made to the Humanities Endowment).

The President's budget request for Fiscal '77 would provide the Arts Endowment with an additional $5 million -- or a total of $87 million; and it would provide the Humanities Endowment with an equal sum, $87 million. Administrative costs would remain at $11 million.

The above figures have been summarized in order to
show that the current authorized levels exceed current appropriations (for fiscal '76 by a total of $90.5 million). They also exceed the President's budget request by a total of $78 million.

In contrast, it should be pointed out that leading arts organizations throughout the nation, based on extensive research presented at the Subcommittee's hearings in November on reauthorization legislation for the Arts and Humanities program, are urging a minimum of $225 million for the Arts Endowment alone for the coming fiscal year. It should also be pointed out that the Senate after two full days of debate in May, 1973, approved by a vote of 61 to 30, a total authorization of $400 million, to be divided equally between the Arts Endowment and the Humanities Endowment ($200 million for each Endowment) to apply to the current fiscal year. This amount was reduced by House action and in Senate-House conference to the present $126 million for each Endowment mentioned above.

Pending at present before the Subcommittee is legislation to reauthorize the Arts and Humanities Endowments for up to four additional years. It is my intention to remain within the presently authorized ceilings for Fiscal '77. That is, to remain within the presently authorized total of $252 million for the two Endowments, exclusive of administrative costs, which as mentioned above have traditionally been left open-ended. In this respect, I would expect no significant change in funding procedures.

Within present funding levels, I expect to include appropriate funds for the two Endowments and their regular program needs. I also expect to give greater emphasis than in
the past to the needs of our nation's museums, and to additional
challenge concepts for the Arts Endowment, which has had a marked
success in exceeding the normal one for one match (one federal
dollar to match one non-federal dollar) standard to the enabling
legislation. I intend to increase the availability of funds
for the Arts Endowment, so that maximum use can be made of
the federal investment and so that a challenge program for
arts organizations can be further developed with the federal
dollar matched, in this case, by three non-federal dollars.
I believe that such a challenge program can prove effective
to many arts organizations which, through the catalyst of the
federal investment, can improve substantially their base of
non-federal support. At the same time, smaller organizations
which cannot match at this ratio will continue to be aided
through the standard provisions in the law. The combination
of options I propose should give the total program greater
flexibility, allowing for increased help to all concerned.

I may also wish to include emphasis on the inservice
retraining of arts teachers. We have an adequate number of
such teachers, but training needs are of great importance.
If implemented, such a proposal would be on a modest basis
with stress on demonstration and pilot-type endeavors.

In sum, I intend to recommend essentially the existing
total, as a level of funding for the Arts and Humanities
program for the coming fiscal year -- 1977. I would hope
that appropriations would measure up to the needs expressed
in the authorization process. With the specifics I have
outlined above, I would recommend that appropriations reach the proposed level for the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities of approximately $250 million in federal funds, plus funds needed for administration. In accordance with present percentages of administrative costs to total program, 6.7%, the $250 million funding level would involve approximately $17 million for administration, or an overall total of $267 million in federal funds.