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Arts and Humanities: Appropriations (1976): Speech 01

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TALKING POINTS

1. The establishment of a Federal agency to support the arts goes back to the time of Washington. But, for the present discussion, the important points in the legislative history are as follows:

1961 - Legislation to establish a Federal Council on the Arts was rejected in the House 166 - 173 (this was probably a Thompson bill).

1963 - 1964 - The Senate passed S. 2379 (Humphrey bill; Pell chaired the Subcommittee and filed report), which established the National Arts and Cultural Development Act, which established the National Council on the Arts. P. L. 88-579

1965 - The Senate passed S. 1483 (Pell bill), which became P. L. 89-209, which established the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities - a three-year bill.

1968 - Reauthorization of the Foundation for two years. HR 11308 - P. L. 90-348

1970 - Reauthorization of the Foundation for three years. S. 3215 - P. L. 91-346

1970 - Congress passed S. 704, the National Museum Act, which transferred \$1 million per year for three years through the Smithsonian to the Arts and Humanities Endowments for museum purposes.

1973 - Reauthorization of the Foundation for three years. S. 795 - P. L. 93-133

Current law expires June 30, 1976.

2. You may want to include some of your ideas from the Club of Rome, which you spoke about with the Swedish parliamentarians.

3. Historically and politically, the big worry was the so-called Federal czar of the arts dictating uniform policy from Washington and using the power of funds to get that single policy implemented. Such has not been the case. This is due to the genius of Roger Stevens and Barnaby Keeney when they set up the Endowment and also Miss Hanks as she has operated the Endowment for the Arts since taking over.

4. State programs are the most important. They not only create a viable political base for the arts, but also allow a dual program of national support for the arts, as well as one which each state can design to meet its own needs, rather than one dictated by a Washington office.

5. Politically, support for the arts has never been a vote-getter in the home state. Those who support the arts, such as Mr. Javits, Mr. Brademas, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Quie, do so almost at their own peril, for, when dollars are appropriated for the arts, irate unemployed citizens back home constantly question your priorities.

Also, even those who support a certain type of art - let's say symphony or museums - will ridicule other areas like odd poems and vocally oppose Federal funds for the "far-out" or "kooky" arts.

6. There has been much discussion and writing about the fine work of the Endowment in its support of creative and innovative programs and projects. The Endowment does not need my praise to establish its bona fides to justify increased funding. It is unfortunate that, as we meet here, and as the Congress starts to discuss the extension of the Endowments legislation, there is a climate abroad in the Congress which supports the idea that every Federal grant must be totally in keeping with our own preconceptions and beliefs. We have only to think back to the action in the House of Representatives which would have the House and Senate exercising veto power over each proposed individual grant from the National Science Foundation to understand about what I am talking.

I am afraid that, as we discuss the Endowments legislation, this same type of thinking will be urged upon us, for it is easy to grab a headline by reading the syllabus for a Federal grant totally out of context with the grant itself. However, I do believe that, for any program to be successful, it must take an occasional chance, and it must be willing to fund projects or proposals which could well backfire and arouse anti-intellectualism and negativism.

When we first enacted the legislation which established both Endowments, there was concern voiced by those calling themselves political conservatives about the possibility of Federal control of the arts and humanities. After 10 years, it is quite clear that such control has not occurred. However, those same skeptics, when it suits their own views, are now seeking to have not only Federal control, but also Congressional control of all Federal grants. This is an approach which I oppose.

You people are perhaps the most vocal and known supporters of the arts in the country. I would alert you to the danger which can be called anti-intellectualism. The life and vitality of not only the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities, but also of all the Federal programs of support for intellectual activities are under attack. They must be defended. We in Congress need your support, not just through nodding heads, but through active political work. Without it the Federal

role would be lost, or, what would perhaps be worse, become a sterile dispenser of funds to politically safe organizations. This is not what we envisioned ten years ago, nor is it what we are meeting here to celebrate.