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STATEMENT BY SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL (D-RI) AT THE CONFIRMATION
HEARING OF EDWARD A. CURRAN TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES
OCTOBER 2, 1985

Mr
I welcome Edward Curran to this confirmation hearing.

As Mr. Curran knows from an earlier discussion I had with him, I have very grave reservations about his nomination to be Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. This situation is not of his own making since obviously the White House plays *the* central role in deciding where individual nominees are to be placed. In this case, I believe that the Administration has targeted the wrong person for a position which I regard as very important indeed.

I have very real respect for Mr. Curran's abilities as a leader in the field of elementary and secondary education. As I told him earlier, I could support him for a number of jobs in the Department of Education that are more in line with the type of professional experience he has had. His tenure as the headmaster of the National Cathedral School, which comprises the lion's share of his non-political career, was, from all reports, successful and highly regarded. His subsequent positions at the National Institute of Education and the Peace Corps are the subject of some controversy which we will examine shortly.

Curran
As one of the only "survivors" in the ~~Senate~~ who had a direct hand in setting up the National Endowment for the Humanities in the early 1960's, I have watched and nurtured two decades of NEH life - one of the most satisfying parts of my legislative career. From time to time I have had disagreements with those

appointed to lead the agency but in general I have been very pleased with the way the Endowment has operated. The spirit of our enabling legislation has remained largely intact no matter which Administration has been in place.

What I am concerned about is that this Administration has shown very little sensitivity to the importance of this particular appointment. It would be natural to assume that the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities had the union card that every other Chairman has had - the Ph.D. But if he does not, it is all the more important that his research and scholarship have the respect of his fellow scholars. Just as the Director of the National Science Foundation is thought of as our leading scientist so the Chairman of NEH should be thought of as our nation's ^{leading} ~~most prominent~~ scholar. What is absolutely critical is that the candidate for the most important and visible position in the humanities in our nation be chosen from among the most prominent humanists who are available to serve.

To my way of thinking there are three primary qualifications that a Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities must possess. They are a proven ability to lead and inspire, significant experience as a professional scholar at the college or university level and as having the utmost respect of the national humanities community.