

University of Rhode Island

DigitalCommons@URI

Reagan Administration: Funding Cuts News
Articles (1981-1982)

Education: National Endowment for the Arts
and Humanities, Subject Files I (1973-1996)

5-9-1981

Reagan Administration: Funding Cuts News Articles (1981-1982): News Article 02

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_l_71

Recommended Citation

"Reagan Administration: Funding Cuts News Articles (1981-1982): News Article 02" (1981). *Reagan Administration: Funding Cuts News Articles (1981-1982)*. Paper 9.
https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_l_71/9https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_l_71/9

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Education: National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, Subject Files I (1973-1996) at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Reagan Administration: Funding Cuts News Articles (1981-1982) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu.

Arts Endowment Aides Outline Budget Cuts They Could Endure

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 8 — Program directors at the National Endowment for the Arts told a House subcommittee today that most of their activities could survive if the endowment's budget were reduced by 10 to 15 percent, but not if they were cut 50 percent as proposed by the Reagan Administration.

At a hearing before a House Appropriations subcommittee, officials of the endowment presented alternative budget proposals based on reductions of 5, 10, 15 and 20 percent from their first budget request for fiscal 1982. That request, made before the Reagan Administration announced its budget-cutting proposals, had called for a budget of \$175 million for the endowment.

The proposals discussed today indicated that with cuts of up to 20 percent the endowment could continue to sponsor programs in all categories it has financed in the past. Cuts in specific areas would be designed to keep levels of spending at about the same percentages of the first budget request.

Officials expressed concern, however, that if funds were cut by more than 15 percent, the viability of many programs would be threatened.

Sandy Schreiber, acting director of the endowment's theater program, said that if the budget were cut by 50 percent, her program would have to eliminate eight of its 11 categories. The categories eliminated would be touring, play publication, media presentations, residencies for playwrights, fellowships for directors, professional theater training programs, interdisciplinary work, and a pilot program designed to encourage affiliations between theater artists and theaters.

Arthur Ballet, the former director of the theater program, who also spoke at the hearings, said even a 20 percent cut would mean that six categories would have to be eliminated, but "at 10 percent we could stay together."

Miss Schreiber said that severe budget cuts would mean that the endowment "would lose out in its efforts to encourage experimentation."

This fear was echoed by Livingston

L. Biddle Jr., chairman of the Arts Endowment, who said that reduced funds "would tend to go with a safer product, and that could have an effect on new artists."

Erza Laderman, who heads the endowment's music program, said that even with a 50 percent cut, all fund categories in the music program would be retained and that "all would suffer equally." He pointed out, however, that these cuts would mean that only two-thirds of the symphony orchestras now receiving endowment money would continue to be financed.

Humanities Chief Agrees

Should Congress vote to restore any funds cut from the Arts Endowment, much of the increase would go to the successful challenge-grant program, now scheduled to be slashed by about 80 percent. Under all of the alternative budgets presented today, the challenge-grant program would receive \$15 million. The challenge-grant figure for fiscal 1981 was \$13.45 million.

Joseph D. Duffey, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which is scheduled to present its own alternative budget proposals to the Interior subcommittee next week, said that his first priority in the revisions also would be "to restore the challenge-grant program."

Theodore Bikel, the actor who is a member of the National Council on the Arts, said: "You can live, presumably, with a 50 percent cut, but you can also live with pestilence and disease."

Discussing the Reagan Administration's suggestion that the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities be turned into a corporation similar to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the officials described it as a positive suggestion. But Mary Ann Tighe, the endowment's deputy chairman for programs, doubted that it would improve arts financing substantially. She said that current legislation included "a mechanism for giving by the private sector" and urged an expansion of this program, called "treasury funding," rather than a restructuring of the endowments.