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Way Cleared For Okay of Arts Fundings

By Phillip M. Kadis
Washington Star Staff Writer

The breaking of a month-long logjam on federal arts and humanities legislation has cleared the way for congressional approval before September legislative and funding deadlines.

In a demonstration of statesmanship that was no less welcome for its elephantine gestation period, House and Senate conferees yesterday swapped and amended provisions of the two sections of their differing bills that had stymied a conference committee for four weeks.

Sen. Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., chairman of the conference committee and one of the patriarchs of arts and humanities legislation, was visibly pleased with the results.

"IF THE staff can prepare language on the compromise proposals put forward here and draw up a table showing how they compare with the original provisions of each bill, I think we could come to a conclusion pretty quickly," said Pell in a spirit of accommodation that was not often present during other meetings of the conferees that began in July.

The big dividing issue was Pell's plan to make the existing self-perpetuating state humanities committees accountable to elected governmental authority in each state. Grant funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities are often funneled through the state humanities committees. The House and the humanities endowment has resisted the plan on the grounds that it would politicize an area of federal financial support that should be immunized from governmental interference.

Another issue in contention has been Pell's insistence that parity in federal funding of the humanities endowment and the National Endowment for the Arts be ended in favor of the arts endowment.

At yesterday's two-hour meeting, Rep. John Brademas, D-Ind., another progenitor of arts and humanities legislation and the chief House conferee, "suggested outlines for resolution of the impasse" on the state humanities committee issue in return for maintaining parity between the twin endowments. At least for the next year or two, while the whole question is given further study.

While Pell went through the motions of arguing that the arts endowment deserves more money because it has been, in his view, more successful, Brademas gently twitted him.

WATERGATE, Vietnam and a host of recent social ills indicated that the ethical and moral concerns of the humanities deserved more financial support that the arts, said Brademas, seconded by See ENDOWM2NT, C-3
ENDOWMENT

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ranking House Republican conferee
Albert H. Quie of Minnesota.

Well, if the humanities are educa-
tional Congress has not been nig-
gardly, countered Pell. After all, it is
now considering a $36 billion educa-
tion bill. (The combined arts and
humanities authorization would not
exceed $300 million at most)

What about federal funding of the
National Gallery of Art? asked
Brademas. Or the Hirshhorn?

Both sides were beginning to enjoy
the exchanges when Sen. Jacob
Javits began to grumble that “eVer-
body will be in trouble if we don’t do
something soon about this bill.”

Without approval of the “Arts, Hu-
manities, and Cultural Affairs Act of
1976,” both endowments will run out
of money by the end of September.
An emergency extension of the ex-
piring appropriation would restrict the
federal culture patrons to the low
appropriations levels of the tran-
sitional budget quarter.

“10 solve this dilemma,” said
Javits, “I am willing to consider
going for parity in basic funding and
deferring the issue for two years.”

The quid for the quo, he made clear,
would be for the House to concede
something on the humanities com-
mittees.

It was then that Brademas outlined
his suggestion or suggested he out-
line.

Instead of permitting the states to
appoint a majority of the members of the
state committees, as contemplat-
ed in the Pell plan, the states would
be allowed to appoint only half of
them under certain conditions.

THE CONDITIONS would be that
states which opt for making the
appointments would be required to kick
in state money to match half the
$200,000 annually allocated to each
state committee the first year and a
full $200,000 the second and each suc-
ceeding year to keep the political ap-
pointments on the state committees.

Members of the committees would
still be rotated, as in the original
House bill to keep the committees from
becoming ingrown, and each state
would still be mandated to ap-
point two members to the state com-
mittee if it decided not to appoint the
full percent.

Quie added that some language
would have to drafted setting qual-
ifications for the appointees, but he
agreed with Pell that these need not
be restricted to academic pedigrees.

Pell has criticized the humanities
endowment and its chairman, Ronald
Berman, whose reappointment the
senator opposes, for what he views as
the overly elitist makeup of the state
committees. Too many profess-
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But occasional glints of hostility
from partially interred battle axes
were hardly noticed in the sunny
concord that dominated the meeting.

It was obvious that Brademas and
Pell had worked things out privately
before the meeting, talks so recent or
so confidential that staffers were still
pessimistic about the meeting the
day before it was to take place.

STILL TO be worked out is a
provision dealing with those 11 states
that have dual humanities-arts coun-
cils.

A proposal for a Bicentennial film
and photo portrait of America, intro-
duced by Democratic vice presiden-
tial candidate Walter Mondale, was
agreed upon at an authorized funding
level of $4 million the first year and
$2 million the second.

Javits said he would have ready at
the next conference meeting lan-
guage on his pet project: a
Bicentennial study intended by John
D. Rockefeller of problems facing the
Republic in its next two centu-
ries.

Pell’s concession to the House on
putting the new Museum Services
Institute under the Department of
Health, Education and Welfare
stuck. The Senate’s Arts in Educa-
tion program, to train teachers of
the arts in new techniques, goes under
the Office of Education instead of the
arts endowment.

Next Tuesday, the arts and hu-
manities solons will confer again to
tie up loose ends.

Once agreement is reached by the
conferees, the full Senate Committee
on Labor is committed by its chair-
man, Sen. Harrison A. Williams, N.J.,
to finally hold a confirmation
hearing on the reappointment of
Berman to head the humanities endow-
ment.

PRESIDENT FORD nominated
Berman last February. Berman’s
term ended last December.

When Pell announced his opposi-
tion to Berman earlier this year, he
said the onetime Shakespeare
scholar had done an acceptable but
not an outstanding job.