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Conference Position Paper (1976): Speech 01

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The Pell Position

1. Impact. The impact on the country of the Humanities Endowment is far less than the Arts -- despite some successes in program areas (The Adams Chronicles). This is just the reverse of the situation when the enabling legislation for Arts and Humanities was being developed. Humanities leaders had the clearest and most articulate voice. It took the addition of the Humanities to bring the Arts along -- and into legislation.

Why is impact so lacking? One main reason involves State programs

In Arts -- from beginning, State Arts Councils were established. Appointed by governors, emanating from States -- getting funds from State legislatures (A total of only \$4 mil. for all States ten years ago -- now more than \$60 mil.) State Arts councils bring the Arts to the grass roots. All groups in the Arts if non-profit are eligible. And the State Councils have been responsible for rapid growth of Community Councils -- from a handful, to over 750, growing all the time -- again at Grass Roots.

In Humanities -- State committees operate in all States. Their leaders are appointed by Berman. They in turn appoint their committee members. It is a laying on of hands. State Committee program is limited -- it prescribes State "themes"; many humanities groups outside of specific theme areas are not eligible for funds in a given year. State committees get not a penny in State funds... there is no community humanities movement (as in the Arts.)

In sum -- The Humanities State program is Washington-based, limited, primarily academically oriented -- NEH says it is to be led by "academic humanists" -- gets no State funds, does not enlist involvement with State legislatures.

No wonder, it is lacking in impact -- and this is the program Berman defended absolutely all last summer. Mounted major campaign.

A result: Arts Endowment has 50 potential critics in the States -- it is a yeasty situation, good for constructive change. Berman has 50 friends in the States -- no opposition. They are all his people.

All this ^{and next pages} leads substance to great uneasiness about Berman for another four years. It lends substance to charges that he is egocentric, arbitrary, does not brook criticism, runs a one-man show, gives relatively little power to his Council -- his 26 private-citizen advisors.

In sum again -- all this lends substance to a serious questioning of both his JUDGMENT and his ABILITY to conduct a broad-based program which can have a major impact on improving the quality of life.

2. State Arts Agencies have a broader and more representative membership. The reverse is true! Comparison of membership of State Humanities Committees with State Arts Agencies indicates that the number of members from labor, from minorities, and from the ordinary occupations of life is far higher on State Humanities Committees than on State Arts Agencies. Out of 850 private citizens on the State Committees, over 100 are members of minorities, over 250 are women, and over 250 cannot be identified by occupation or by status as other than ordinary citizens.