10-1-1996


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PELL AND JEFFORDS HAIL PASSAGE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES ACT

Senators Claiborne Pell (D-RI), Ranking Minority Member of the Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities, and Jim Jeffords (R-VT), Chairman, today hailed the passage of Title VII, the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996, on the Omnibus Spending Act.

"This new act," Pell said, "will enable communities across the nation to provide the new technologies necessary to compete effectively in the years ahead. It will give our citizens increased opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for a successful future.

"It is my hope," Jeffords said, "that by expanding this partnership at the national level, museum and library services will be more widely available and better able to meet the needs of the 21st Century, with the goals of introducing more people to the magic of reading, the joys of learning, and the treasures that are part of our cultural heritage."

Their legislation amends the Museum Services Act and consolidates the Institute of Museum Services and the Library Services and Construction Act, transferring all library programs from the Department of Education to the Institute of Museum and Library Services within the National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities.

"I am delighted," Barbara Weaver, Director of Rhode Island’s Library Services, said, "to learn of the passage of the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996. It is a tribute to the hard work and determination of the library community, as well as to the long-standing commitment of supporters like Senator Pell, that this landmark legislation has reached fruition."

The Institute shall consist of an Office of Museum Services and an Office of Library Services with the directorship alternating every four years between an individual with special competence with regard to museum services and an individual with special competence in library and information services.

To assure a smooth transition, the first Director will be the current Director of the Institute of Museum Services. The Offices are authorized for fiscal year 1997 at $28 million and $150 million, respectively.

Pell and Jeffords said that the merger of libraries into the expanded Institute is designed to give them greater strength and visibility than under their current status within the Department of Education.

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