Legislative History of the Reauthorization of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) (1990): Article 03

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GOP Loses Bid to Freeze Arts Funds To States That Cut Local Funding

Proxy votes led to another defeat for House Republicans yesterday, this time in the Education and Labor panel's Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations.

During its markup of a bill (HR 2361) that would reauthorize the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum Services for two years, Steve Gunderson, R-Wis., offered an amendment that would have placed new restrictions on NEA grants to states that cut funding for the arts.

Federal law forbids states from supplanting their own funds for the arts with federal grants, but Gunderson said several states have been doing just that.

For example, he said 24 states decreased funding for the arts from fiscal 1990 to fiscal 1991, while NEA grants to states increased nearly 25 percent over that same period.

Gunderson's amendment would have frozen, at current levels, NEA grants to states that reduce state funding for the arts.

Montana Democrat Pat Williams, chairman of the subcommittee and sponsor of the authorization bill, opposed the amendment, arguing that it would lead to an overall decrease in the funding of the arts.

The amendment was initially approved by voice vote. But when a roll-call vote was taken, it was defeated, 7-13.

Gunderson won the support of Democrats Matthew G. Martinez, Calif., and Major R. Owens, N.Y. — Martinez said some of the money spent on arts funding could be put to better use, such as Head Start — but the amendment was rejected when Williams cast eight nay votes by proxy. Gunderson said he will offer the amendment again in full committee.

Rejected, 7-13: (D 2-12; R 5-1)

Democrats (2)

Republicans (5)

Owens (N.Y.)

Gunderson (Wis.)

Hoekstra (Mich.)

McKeon (Calif.)

Barrett (Neb.)

Boehner (Ohio)

Democrats (12)

Republicans (1)

Williams (Mont.)

Mink (Hawaii)*

Klink (Pa.)*

Engel (N.Y.)*

Becerra ( Calif.)*

Unsoeld ( Wash.)*

Roukema (N.J.)

Clay (Mo.)*

Hoekstra (Mich.)*

Miller ( Calif.)*

Payne (N.J.)*

Unsoeld ( Wash.)*

* Voted by proxy

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mislmanagement and that other federal agencies do enough to promote democracy, while opponents said that the proposed authorization was a "modest investment" in encouraging democracy around the globe.

• Natcher Vote. William H. Natcher, D-Ky., cast his 18,000th consecutive vote yesterday. Lawmakers briefly stopped floor action after the vote to make note of the record.

SENATE FLOOR: $1.9 billion "spring supplemental" passes.

The Senate yesterday passed, by voice vote, a $1.9 billion fiscal 1993 supplemental spending bill, sending the measure to a conference to resolve differences with the House-passed version.

The legislation (HR 2118) would cover unanticipated costs in the current fiscal year. Much of the funding would pay for the peacekeeping mission in Somalia.

The measure also includes $200 million each for summer jobs and community policing programs.

In a procedural move, members rejected, 39-59, an amendment by William V. Roth Jr., R-Del., that sought to establish a number of tax incentives for businesses, including establishment of a 13.8 percent tax credit for companies hiring new employees. It also would have increased the amount of tax deductible business expenses allowed for small businesses.

The Roth amendment would have been paid for with spending cuts, including reduced spending for legislative staff and reduced funding for highway demonstration projects that have already been authorized.

Members approved, by voice vote, an amendment by Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., that would include citrus farmers in a federal disaster relief program.

Members also approved, by voice vote, an amendment by Larry E. Craig, R-Idaho, that would require the administration to provide disaster payments for sugar beet growers in Idaho whose crops were damaged by a virus in 1992.

Craig said that the funds have already been earmarked by Congress but that the disaster awards have been caught up in red tape and have not been made.

SPACE STATION funding increased to $2.1 billion.

The House Appropriations Committee yesterday voted to boost fiscal 1994 funding of the space station Freedom by $300 million.

As approved by the Veteran Affairs, Housing and Urban Development and Independent Agencies Subcommittee on May 27, the fiscal 1994 spending bill for veterans, housing, environment and space programs included $1.85 billion for the beleaguered space station.

But under the amendment adopted 31-21 by a show of hands by the full committee, the space station would get $2.1 billion in fiscal 1994.

The increase brings funding for the program in line with President Clinton's request for a scaled-down version of Freedom.

"I believe we should give the space station one more chance," said Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, chairman of the VA, HUD and Independent Agencies Subcommittee.

The amendment included cuts in other programs to pay for the increased funds for the space station.

All but $85 million of the funds