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7-25-1989

Obscenity: Andres Serrano Controversy (1989): Memorandum 03

Alexander D. Crary

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M E M O R A N D U M

July 25, 1989

TO: Senator
FROM: ADC
RE: Endowment Appropriations Bill on the Floor Tomorrow

The Interior Appropriations bill (with NEA, NEH and IMS) is likely to be on the floor tomorrow.

As I have told you, the Senate bill takes the House one step further by blacklisting the two arts organizations from receiving NEA funds for 5 years as well as cuts \$400,000 from the Visual Arts Program and adds \$100,000 for a study of grant procedures.

I am unable to learn anything about Byrd's strategy for the floor tomorrow.. As of this evening no one is aware of any amendments - although the rumor mill has it that someone will try to add the Washington Project for the Arts to black list because they are exhibiting the Mapplethorpe show now. If this happens, however, they would have to blacklist the four other museums that either have exhibited it or are scheduled to.

I hope it is safe to speculate that Byrd has this greased and that floor action will be held to a minimum - allowing changes (which can only be for the better) in conference. His staff has just told me that they are "cautiously optimistic" that there will be no further action. The press has been so negative on what the Senate Committee has already done that anything more may seem pointless.

I do not like you voting for the censorship of the two organizations. This is entirely against what you have stood for and against what the Endowment was set up to do. You should consider voting against the bill for this reason and, if you vote for it, you should be aware of what you are doing.

The calls this afternoon have been overwhelmingly against this punitive action and they ask you to take a stand. I will monitor floor action in case something worse comes up.