Consolidated and Reformed Workforce Development and Literacy Act (1976): Speech 01

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Issue: Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act

Background: Senator Jeffords took the language reauthorizing the Act from S.856 that reauthorizes the Endowments, rewrote (under pressure from his Republican colleagues) certain parts to conform to S.143 by having it administered by the IMS instead of the Federal Council, and incorporated it into this bill. He wants to keep Indemnity in the bill.

The House bill has no provisions for Indemnity, and would like to have it dropped. Senate Democrats would also prefer to see Indemnity dropped from the bill. However, if Senator Jeffords insists upon its inclusion, the Senate wishes the Federal Council restored to manage the program, with the administrator still housed at the Arts Endowment.

The Senate can either fix the language or drop this section of the bill. The problem is that the House probably will not agree to change the language as they believe that anything with the word “arts” in it will be defeated on the House floor. It would be best for you not to get involved in the discussion.

The Indemnity Program has worked very successfully in the past with the National Endowment for the Arts administering the program. This is the appropriate agency to do so, not the IMS.

The Senate bill amends the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act to expand its scope to include indemnification for exhibitions originating in the United States and touring the U.S. This must be done gradually. The Arts Endowment does not have the resources/staff to handle more than a modest expansion in FY’97.

Talking Point: I understand fully the thrust of what Senator Jeffords is trying to do by opening up the Indemnity program, and I agree, but, because it involves the arts, perhaps this would be best done within the context of the reauthorization of the Endowments.