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## Arts and Humanities: Reports (1979-1980): Correspondence 01

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Mr. President. Today the Senate is taking up S. 1429, the Museum Services Amendments of 1980. This legislation would extend the life of the Institute of Museum Services for two years, through fiscal year 1982.

The Institute was initially created in 1976, and is currently located within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, although it is slated to be transferred to the new Department of Education when that agency comes into being. The Committee decided to extend the Institute's authorization for only two years, rather than the usual five, so that it could reexamine the question of the Institute's location within the Federal government at the end of that period.

Museum popularity is at an all-time high, with attendance of nearly 500 million persons per year. At the same time, inflation is taking a heavy toll on museum programs and services. Many museums have been forced to curtail their hours and limit their services to the public, in order to stay within their budgets. Therefore, S. 1429 authorizes appropriations of \$21.5 million for fiscal year 1981 and \$28 million for fiscal year 1982, to allow room for reasonable growth in the assistance the Museum Services Institute is able to provide.

S. 1429 makes minor changes to the existing statute. One allows the institute to use up to five percent of its appropriation to make contracts and cooperative agreements with professional museum organizations. These organizations, which are currently not eligible for assistance, engage in activities designed to advance the well-being of museums and the museum profession. Contracts

would be limited to one year, and would be required to be used for specific projects rather than for general operating support.

A second change authorizes the Institute to establish its own grant review procedures. This would allow the Institute to utilize peer review, similar to that employed by the Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, if it believed that such an advisory panel system would result in the highest quality judgments.

A third change authorizes the Institute to hire a limited number of experts in the museum field as excepted personnel. There is at present no specific civil service classification for museum specialists. The excepted personnel would fill this gap in the Institute's staffing.

I believe the S. 1429 provides an excellent basis for the future of the Museum Services Institute. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.