

1979

Biddle, Livy: Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (1977-1979): Correspondence 04

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NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR
THE ARTS

WASHINGTON
D.C. 20506



A Federal agency advised by the
National Council on the Arts

April 27, 1979

Honorable Claiborne Pell
Chairman
Subcommittee on Education,
Arts and Humanities
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator:

I wanted to bring you up-to-date on an important matter concerning the administration of the Arts Endowment which we have been addressing over the past year, our peer panel review system.

Recognizing that panel review is crucial to the work of the Endowment, we felt that the change in administration provided an appropriate time to take a serious look at the Endowment panel structure, to make sure it was adequate to the complex tasks before it.

The development of long-range planning at the Arts Endowment required time for policy discussion on the part of the panels. At the same time, the tremendous increase in applications since the Endowment began had already resulted in severe strain on the existing system. The remarkable growth and diversity of arts activities all over the United States over the last decade made broader participation from the field on our panels a vital necessity. But simply adding on more people had already made several panels unwieldy. It was clear that a thorough Program by Program examination of our panel system was in order.

That study, begun in April, 1978, resulted in a series of comprehensive recommendations already proving beneficial to us. I am enclosing a copy of our March, 1979 Report: A Study of the Panel System at the Arts Endowment, and a memorandum that summarizes the results of our implementation of the panel study recommendations.

We are confident that these changes have strengthened our panel system, enabled it to meet its responsibilities to a broadening arts community, and to take on new tasks as the Arts Endowment plans for the future.

Sincerely,

Livingston Biddle

Livingston L. Biddle, Jr.
Chairman

Enclosures