

1976

Berman, Ronald: Memoranda (1975-1984): Memorandum 04

Livingston Biddle

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Memorandum to Senator Pell

From: Livingston Biddle, Staff Director, Senate Special
Subcommittee on Arts and Humanities

The material below relates to a letter which I am very reliably informed was signed by Ronald Berman, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and sent to academic leaders in recent weeks. Both sources remarked that the letter appeared to be in the nature of a form letter. The text which was reported to me appears to be identical in the cases involved.

With the letter went a number of newspaper articles and columns including columns Dr. Berman has said express views from which he wishes to disassociate himself.

The letter says that enclosed is publicity regarding the "Pell affair" and an accurate case book thereof.

Then follows this phrasing or substantially this phrasing, precisely taken from my notes:

"Implicit is the attempted politicization of the agency. Pell objects to the professional use of Endowment funds. He prefers that NEH funds go to ~~grocers and lumberjacks~~ state bureaucracies and then be disseminated to grocers and lumberjacks to enable them to practice(?) the Humanities."

The letter concludes by saying that the "Trenton Times" has nailed down the issue, and that Senator Williams has promised hearings.