

1973

## Museum Services Act (1973): News Article 03

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# For Museums: A Bill to Avert Bankruptcy

By Jean M. White

Senate hearings are scheduled to open today on the first bill that would provide federal money to improve the facilities and services of the nation's hard-pressed museums, which must be among the few institutions that receive no direct government grants.

More and more museums, caught in a squeeze between rising attendance and public demands and rising costs, have been closing off sections, cutting back programs, and shortening hours. The help they have gotten from other government programs to date has been earmarked chiefly for upgrading professional staff, educational projects for special groups like ghetto children and short-lived special projects.

"The program grants help a great deal, but museums are going bankrupt on their

day-to-day existence," said Kyran McGrath, director of the American Association of Museums, at a press conference yesterday. "Most museums have trouble just keeping their doors open, much less starting new programs."

Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.) has introduced a bill calling for a three-year authorization—\$25 million for the first year and \$30 million for each of the next two years—to provide federal funds to improve museum buildings, support operating, and maintenance budgets and help pay for renovation and construction costs.

About one in five of the nation's museums are in buildings 50 years old or older. Many have had difficulty raising money for such necessary services as guard protection and staff salaries.

Foundation and private grants usually are not forthcoming for such mundane

services, McGrath pointed out. Instead, monies go for more glamorous projects, such as special purchases or exhibits.

The witnesses scheduled for today's hearing are Nancy Hanks, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, Dr. Ronald Berman, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and S. Dillon Ripley, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

They speak for organizations that now have monies

for special museum programs. On Thursday, the scheduled witnesses include a line-up from the museum world.

The hearings are being held jointly by two subcommittees to consider Pell's bill and also reauthorization of a National Museum Act, which allows the Smithsonian to make professional grants.

Pell's bill—which corresponds roughly to House legislation introduced by Rep. John Brademas (D-Ind.)

—would set up a special institute in the Office of Education to administer the museum grants.

The proposed special museum legislation will run into the administration's budget-cutting vow and its stand against initiating new programs. For that reason, McGrath noted yesterday, he expects that federal spokesmen are likely to offer no more than general praise for the role of museums, without specifically backing Pell's bill.

## Gregory: No More Nightclub Dates

By Hollie I. West

Anyone interested in hearing Dick Gregory work his political satire in a night club is advised to go to the Cellar Door this week. His engagement there through Saturday is one of his last nightclub appearances.

affair. Referring to the White House "enemies list," he said, "It seems like Nixon would have had at least one Vietcong on it after fighting a war with those people for all these years."

He also said: "All the

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