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Legislative History of the Reauthorization of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) (1990): Correspondence 01

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Recommended Citation

Able, Edward M. Jr., "Legislative History of the Reauthorization of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) (1990): Correspondence 01" (1994). *Legislative History of the Reauthorization of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) (1990)*. Paper 30.

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American
Association
of
Museums

Edward H. Able, Jr.
Executive Director

July 11, 1994

The Hon. Claiborne Pell
United States Senate
335 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Pell:

On behalf of the 54 museums in Rhode Island, I am writing to thank you for your strong record of support for funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. Our files indicate that you voted against an amendment to cut the agency by 10 percent in 1991 as well as against proposed content restrictions on grants in 1993.

Despite the Senate's defeat of those amendments, NEA funding continues a slow decline. In real terms, the agency receives barely half of what it received at the beginning of the 1980's. Now its funding is threatened yet again because of a handful of controversial grants -- including one subgrant of \$150.

We agree with Senators who believe that arts funding must be justified along with other programs in the Interior Appropriations bill. We do not agree, however, that any controversial grant, no matter how small the dollar amount, should taint the argument for funding: arts funding must be justified, but the Senate should apply the same standard to all agencies. No agency could measure up to the 100 percent standard that is being asked of the NEA. Does any other agency stand to lose \$7 million because of a \$150 subgrant?

Please resist any efforts to cut funding further; please support efforts to restore funding should they be offered.

With best wishes and gratitude for your past support,

Sincerely,



Edward H. Able, Jr.

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