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Claiborne Pell

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL

Mr. President, sending so much of the Endowment's monies in block grant to the states would undermine the effectiveness of our support for culture. Disrupting the federal-state partnership in this way would injure the vital goals of supporting artistic excellence and access to the arts for Americans. Although a strong state presence is important in furthering the arts in our society, this amendment would further reduce national competition on the basis of excellence and all but eliminate the viability of the Endowment as an entity representing this nation's commitment to culture. The bill as written already significantly increases the set-aside to the states. I note that the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies itself opposes changes in the share of funds allocated to the states. The states understand full well the necessity for a strong federal partner for their success. First, shifting federal funds away from the Endowment, means elimination of many projects that have national or regional impact. Second, federal funds have a far greater multiplier effect on arts funding, increasing the amount of funds going to support artists and arts organizations. Thus, this amendment would frustrate one of the most admirable strategies of the Endowment -- increasing matching funds for the arts from state and private sources. The federal government will simply receive less bang for its buck and our culture will suffer accordingly. Only a national agency provides the widespread renown for the best arts organizations and artists because patrons and corporations pay attention to the national recognition that comes with federal support. I urge my colleagues to reject this amendment. Some of the richest arts programs take place in the form of national partnerships between organizations in different states and require a strong

national entity to encourage their work. Endowment supported theater and dance groups, operas and symphonies which leave their city stages and tour the country, radio and television programs, and major music and art institutions all require national support. These programs cross state boundaries and therefore would not receive funding from independent state arts councils. I urge my colleagues to reject this amendment.