

1975

Arts and Humanities: Reauthorization (1975): Correspondence 06

Livingston Biddle

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TO: SENATOR ✓

FROM: LB

Nov. 26, '75

The attached from Maury Coats (our Texas proponent of your Pell amendment on state Humanities programs) expresses concern about not having an option for existing State Arts and Humanities Councils to continue.

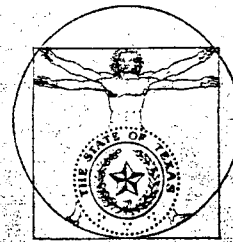
I wrote back for you the attached just to postpone any decision on this, though I know that you said at the hearings that you didn't want to mislead anyone as to your intent to set up independent groups in each state. At the same time, I didn't think we would want to lose now the support of our major defender -- so left it for further discussions.

One possibility would be to allow present A&H Commissions, or Councils, to exist and then to gradually phase them out and into separate groups -- so that existing structures (now in 11 States) would have time to regroup.

Perfect

Edward R Hudson Jr, Chairman, Fort Worth Dr George S Heyer Jr, Vice-Chairman, Austin Mrs Ana Solis Riddel, Secretary, Houston Dr Lorrin Kennamer, Treasurer, Austin
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Texas Commission on the Arts & Humanities



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Maurice Coats
Executive Director

NOV 24 1975
November 17, 1975

The Honorable Claiborne Pell, Chairman
Special Subcommittee on Arts & Humanities
Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Pell:

Again I want to express my gratitude to you and members of your Committee for allowing those of us in support of Section 102 of Senate Bill 1800 to express our views before your Committee this last Thursday, November 13. It is our sincere hope that Congress will accept your amendment as you have worded it.

Enclosed is a complete copy of the statement representing the views of the five states which were represented on the Panel. As with any presentation, many things come to mind after the hearing which were not directly addressed during the hearing. I would like to take this opportunity to express my views on some other elements of Section 102 of Senate Bill 1800 which will extend and expand the testimony given before your Committee.

I am very concerned about your intention to force all states to have separate humanities councils. My personal view from having read this legislation very carefully is that each state may determine for itself which agency should be designated as the state humanities council and that those of us which have been designated as both arts and humanities councils would be allowed full participation in the state humanities council program proposed by this legislation. The basis of our strong support for the Amendment was its strong position in favor of state determination and the confidence that it expresses in the ability of state elected and appointed officials to fulfill the obligations and responsibilities which may be assigned to them in the humanities. Should your legislation be changed to require separate councils at the state level much of the benefits of the amendment would be lost. We would find ourselves in a position of not removing federal control but simply exchanging one federal control for another. In my view it is far more important to allow state governments to participate in these decisions than it is to remove them from the decision making process and force them into new molds which will require damaging restructuring in many of our states.

As I mentioned during the question and answer period before your Committee, there is a ten-year history of tension and concern between the Endowment for the Arts and the Endowment for the Humanities in many areas of definition of

responsibilities. Those of us at the state level which have kept the arts and the humanities as a single agency do not have those difficulties and the tensions will be considerably less in both fields within our states. Further, it costs much less to have a single administration over two areas of responsibility than it does to have two separate administrations over each area of responsibility. To set up a separate humanities council in states which already have designated one agency as its arts and humanities councils would require duplicate funding for administration which would be, in my view, wasteful.

There is some feeling on the part of opponents to Section 102 that state agencies which bear the name arts and humanities are a simple accident of history resulting from an attempt to model the federal legislation. In Texas at least, this certainly is not true. This Commission began as the Texas Fine Arts Commission and remained with that title until 1971, at which time it specifically requested the permission of the state legislature to expand its activities to include the humanities. This was a conscious and deliberate action on the part of this Commission because of the genuine and real concern for public access in the humanities. We understand the difference between the arts and humanities; our concerns are in both areas and it is with the concurrence of our state legislature that we have the authority to develop both areas of activity within the State of Texas. To set up a separate agency in the humanities would also require that we compete with each other for funding from the state legislature. As you know, it has been a long, arduous task for state arts councils to develop appropriations which are in any way meaningful to many parts of the country. In Texas we have just achieved a two-hundred and seventy per cent increase in the state appropriation for this agency. For the first time in our history, we have funds from a humanities source (the state legislature) which allows us to begin encouraging and developing humanities programs. This funding is still minimal and because of our more significant funding in the arts for a number of years, it will be some time before our humanities programming is equal to the programming in the arts. But we have taken the first step; the legislature is agreeable to this direction. To have a federally mandated separation of the arts and humanities in Texas requiring the establishment of a separate state humanities agency would not only mean a necessary restructuring of the political base, but would also pit the humanities council against the arts council in the same arena for funding from the state legislature.

I submit respectfully, Senator, that there has been far too much confrontation between the arts and humanities as demonstrated by the National Endowments and that it is time we recognized that these two areas of enterprise are complementary and should join together in cooperative efforts.

This we have done at the state level in Texas and in a few other states as well. It is extremely important that the progress we have made to date not be endangered by this new legislation.

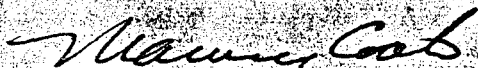
It is equally important that those states choosing to maintain state arts councils which are separate agencies from the state humanities councils be allowed to do so. Many state arts agencies, as you know from our discussion in Austin with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, do not wish to become active in the field of the humanities. This is an alternative which must remain available to those agencies. I do not propose that every state have an arts and

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humanities agency. I do propose for your consideration, Senator, that your legislation secure the right of state determination in this matter so that each state may judge for itself the best structure most appropriate for support of both the arts and humanities.

Again let me express my most sincere gratitude and pleasure at being able to present my views to you directly.

With every good wish,



Maurice Coats
Executive Director

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cc: Members, Special Subcommittee on Arts & Humanities; Members, Texas Commission on the Arts and Humanities; Members, Humanities Advisory Panel, TCAH; Members, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies; Mr. Clark Mitze, National Endowment for the Arts.

Enclosure