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July 2016

Berman, Ronald: Memoranda (1975-1984): Correspondence 05

Livingston Biddle

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Recommended Citation

Biddle, Livingston, "Berman, Ronald: Memoranda (1975-1984): Correspondence 05" (2016). *Berman, Ronald: Memoranda (1975-1984)*. Paper 29.

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Aug. 2

Ernie ...

Enclosed are two documents relating to the Berman issue, one highly confidential.

Since this paper was developed just for the Senator's own use, some of those mentioned in it have indicated that they cannot publicly help us, because of grants Berman is making to their institutions.

This is a sorry situation -- but I have been actually called by wives of leaders in the humanities imploring against their husbands getting involved.

There seems to be a general fear of Berman's reactions in turning off the funds to those who do not support him, and similarly, passing out special favors to those that do. *he seems to be*

This is the danger inherent in his having now in the States 50 faithful followers who are obeying his every recommendation, and putting great pressure on Senators and Representatives.

Given another four years in office, he will really dominate this field -- in the way the Congress most feared when it established the initial program -- i.e. that one Chairman could have unchallenged control.

The reason this could not occur on the Arts side is because the Chairman there (Nancy Hanks now) has in the States 50 potential critics who do not owe their appointments to her and who are ready to challenge her program at the drop of a hat.

I think a major argument vs. Berman (he has called the Pell proposal "wholly unacceptable" to him -- that is, to allow each State to determine its own best course for the Humanities) is that the Arts have a Federal-State Partnership which has worked very well... Berman has totally opposed involving his program with State governments. He claims he is saving the program from the bureaucracy -- but he is actually increasing a Washington bureaucratic control.

Liv

Re the Pell (Senate) bill and State Humanities programs.

Essentially, the Senate bill (which has been amended and carefully considered) allows each State to determine what it feels is best for a state program in the Humanities, which the Federal govt. would partly support through the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The State would determine which program it wants among several options.

1. It could choose to go with its existing State Humanities committee, appointed through Washington.

2. It could establish a new program.

3. It could phase in a gubernatorial appointment process for its existing committee members

4. It could continue with an existing combined Arts and Humanities Program. 11 States now have these.

Berman says this is "wholly unacceptable" though he gave it lip service at the time it was being prepared, and it passed the Senate on unanimous consent motion.

THE HOUSE BILL (they have been under immense pressure from Berman et al.) Leaves the choice of which State program is best to Berman. (to the Humanities Chairman.)

The Senate bill says that the States should decide what is best -- not Washington... Apparently Berman is fearful that his programs, if put to a state choice, would not be selected in many cases, or in some cases... His State committee members, who owe him their allegiance, are making this a battle royal.

HARRISON A. WILLIAMS, JR.

CHAIRMAN

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE

Ernie...

This is a position paper
I developed for the Senator
which may be helpful to you.
He has been using this paper
himself, so there is nothing
restricted about it.

Liv.

The Pell Position on Ronald Berman, Chairman of National Endowment for the Humanities

As Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Arts and Humanities since its inception in 1964, and as sponsor and Senate originator of the federal program to encourage the development of both the arts and the humanities, Senator Pell bases his assessment of the Humanities Endowment on over ten years of experience.

He finds the Humanities Endowment's programs are relatively lacking in impact. He considers this conclusion especially valid in terms of both a comparison with the impact on the nation of the National Endowment for the Arts, and with the momentum initially engendered by the Humanities community in mustering strength and enthusiasm for the concept of federal help for the humanities more than a decade ago.

Senator Pell believes that the Arts Endowment is fulfilling its mission and its potentials in making the arts available to all sections of the country. There has been a rapid growth of the arts in the past ten years. Much of this is attributable to the catalyst role of the Arts Endowment, Senator Pell believes. Ten years ago the States were appropriating approximately \$4 million for the arts -- today that figure has increased almost 15-fold, to close to \$60 million.

The Humanities State-based program stems from Washington. The Endowment Chairman appoints the State chairmen, who in turn constitute State committees and staff (paid).

In contrast State Arts Councils are appointed by State governors. They also have paid staffs, but these come from State-originated selections.

Format of the Humanities State programs stems from Washington direction.

Format for State Arts programs is determined by the States.

Pell feels the Humanities programs in the States -- at grass roots level -- tends to be limited and less democratic than the Arts comparisons.

Pell proposed liberalizing the State humanities programs and making them similar in structure to those in the Arts... Berman and the Humanities Endowment strongly opposed this proposal.

Pell attributes the growth, and appeal of the arts to greatly expanded audiences -- i.e. their impact -- to the success and remarkable growth of the State programs in a decade's time.

He feels Berman's opposition to similar concepts for the Humanities indicative of limited leadership abilities.

Pell notes these results over a ten year span: limited grass-roots support for the humanities; no enthusiastic State-originated movement stemming directly from State wishes and State planning; a failure to attract more than limited support from State legislatures for the concept of the humanities; a lack of awareness of the program in Congress where the people's wishes are manifested; and an excessive dependence on the part of the Endowment on academia, both at State committee and national levels.

Pell also notes that ten years ago, when the Humanities program was being considered in Congress, along with the arts, it was the Humanities constituency who provided the best and most enthusiastic leadership for legislation -- who had the most imaginative ideas for the use of federal funds, who were most instrumental in persuading the Congress on the benefits to accrue to the Nation through greater and more vigorous emphasis and concentration on the Humanities.

Pell believes that the voice of the Arts has demonstrably outstripped the Humanities over the ten year span of the two Endowment's lives.

He has praised the earlier leadership of the Humanities Endowment -- under Dr. Barnaby C. Keeney and Wallace B. Edgerton. He finds that the program has faltered in its national impact in recent years under the Berman chairmanship.

He rates Berman's chairmanship as adequate and passable -- but not of exceptional quality.

He believes that only an individual of exceptional proved ability should be reappointed to head either the Endowment for the Humanities or the Endowment for the Arts.

He makes a clear distinction between appointment of a Presidential nominee and reappointment -- between nomination and reappointment; he finds that Berman's record is of insufficient merit. And he is therefore opposed to the candidate's confirmation, on the leadership level relating to both overall program and policy.