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6-23-1989

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Geoffrey Platt Jr.

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American
Association
of
Museums

*AAM response
to regrant
question*

June 23, 1989

The Honorable Sidney R. Yates
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We hope you know how much your support has meant to museums and the cultural community over the years. If it were possible to express that appreciation even more, we would do it now for your leadership in the midst of one of the severest crises federal funding of the arts and humanities has ever faced in the Congress.

Your office has asked for our comments on the amendment offered at the subcommittee mark-up on 20 June. Of course, our response to that request will have to be limited without any specific language to review (we would be delighted to have the opportunity to offer our comments at that point as well).

Although the limiting of the Endowments' re-granting capacities would appear to affect the museum programs hardly at all, we share with some of our sister organizations worries about negative effects of such prohibitions, especially in the area of support for individuals and organizations that have difficulty in gaining access to federal funds and in the area of the administrative burden the inability to re-grant might put on the Endowments. We have particular concerns also about what the effect might be on funding individual scholarship, as much of that scholarship is important to museums and other educational institutions.

On a point of detail, it has also occurred to us that in the language of the amendment a distinction should be drawn between grants and cooperative agreements or contracts, where in the latter two forms the contractor (agency) *per se* can exercise more oversight. Many service organizations that use federal funds to serve their fields do so under cooperative agreements or contracts.

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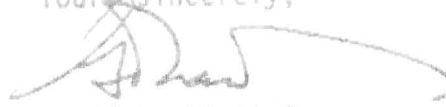
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The Honorable Sidney R. Yates
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But we make even these limited comments on the abstract. You are, however, working on our behalf in the real world of politics. Bismarck's comment about politics being "the art of the possible" comes to mind in this situation. It is our belief that solutions can be found to the difficult predicament in which federal funding of culture now finds itself. Finding these solutions will require creativity; we offer whatever help we can provide in such crafting. Implementing those solutions may require changes and adjustments; we recognize that flexibility is required, especially in situations of political peril. In short, we offer you our support and whatever expertise we may have, so that the end result can be positive for the arts and humanities in America, a goal we all share.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

Yours sincerely,



Geoffrey Platt Jr.
Director of Government Affairs

cc: Edward H. Able, Jr.
Kathy Dwyer Southern