

1996

## Appropriations (1996): Report 03

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## PROPOSED COMMITTEE REPORT LANGUAGE

### REAUTHORIZATION OF THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM SERVICES

#### 1. {Identity}

The Committee is aware that both the Institute of Museum Services, and the Library Services and Construction Act program currently at the Department of Education, have had, to date, separate identities closely related to their respective fields. The Committee is thus mindful that they have had symbolic as well as substantive importance to their respective communities as special places which have unusual understanding of the particular needs, problems, and potential of museums and libraries, respectively.

As a result, it is the Committee's intention that, to the extent possible, the staff of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, including especially senior staff such as the Director and the two Deputy Directors, collectively have broad professional experience in the museum and library fields, and that, preferably, some individuals among the staff combine practical experience in both museums and libraries.

At the same time, staff should continue to include people whose experience is chiefly in either museum or library work, so that professionals in the two fields can continue to have confidence that when they call or write, their concerns will be understood. Since the professional skills of the Directors will rotate between the museum and library worlds, it is especially important for continuity of professional judgment that the Deputy Directors for the museum and library services branches respectively have museum and library backgrounds. Knowledge of the practical--and sometimes distinct--problems that both museums and libraries have in fulfilling their missions of education of the general public must continue to shape the program offerings and policies of the new Institute, as it has shaped the directions of its two predecessors.

#### 2. {Money flow/focus}

The Committee believes that museums and libraries should be treated as equally valuable components in the nation's education enterprise. Thus the Committee intends that, despite any differences in authorized and appropriated funding levels for the library and museum components of the Institute of Museum and Library Services that may occur now or in the future, the Director and the agency's staff, as well as the two Boards, should be mindful of the contributions of those institutions--whether libraries or

museums--about which they may have less direct responsibility in the normal course of business, and to view the contributions of the two kinds of institutions as of equal value in the goal of advancing the nation's educational agenda and goals.

3. {Stability}

Both the Institute for Museum Services and the Library Services and Construction Act program serve institutions of unusual importance, not only in our nation's history but especially now, as new possibilities arising from the telecommunications revolution, as well as a renewed and increased commitment by museums and libraries to their educational missions, are opening up new avenues for formal education through increased partnerships with the schools, as well as for informal education of adults and children.

Thus it is the intention of the Committee to use this consolidation in part to stabilize both programs in the present uncertain political climate. Recognizing the key contributions of these two kinds of institutions, the Committee intends that this consolidation be seen as strengthening these programs and as a vote of confidence both in their current functions and in a promising future with new possibilities for joint activities of the library and museum communities.