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## Arts and Humanities: Reports (1979-1980): Report 02

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## MUSEUM SERVICES AMENDMENTS OF 1980

### REPORT

( To accompany S. 1429 )

The Committee on Labor and Human Resources to which was referred legislation to amend and extend the Museum Services Act to provide for the improvement of museum services reports an amendment in the nature of a substitute and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

#### PRINCIPLE FEATURES OF THE BILL

S. 1429 would:

1. Amend and extend the Museum Services Act for a period of two years.
2. Authorize the Institute of Museum Services (hereinafter in this statement referred to as the "Institute.") to establish its own grant review procedures.
3. Allow the funding of professional museum organizations on a limited basis.
4. Permit the Institute to hire a limited number of employees as excepted personnel.

#### LEGISLATIVE CONSIDERATION

S. 1429 was introduced on June 27, 1979. The Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources held hearings on S. 1429 on June 28, 1979.

The Committee received testimony from officials of the Institute of Museum Services, and representatives from

a variety of museum institutions.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Museum Services Act was Title II of the Arts, Humanities, and Cultural Affairs Act of 1976 and was established by Public Law 94-462.

The legislation established in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare the Institute of Museum Services which is administered by a Director with the advice of the National Museum Services Board. The Director and members of the Board are appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.

#### MUSEUM NEEDS

The testimony presented to the Committee indicated that the Institute is accomplishing what the enabling legislation intended, although the increasing needs of our nation's museums makes this a difficult task indeed. The Committee heard sobering statements about the toll inflation is taking on museum operations. Cutbacks in services to the public, reduced hours and open days, and higher admission charges are some aspects of this larger problem. Operating costs have increased dramatically at the same time that private giving and endowment assets have fallen off.

Douglas Dillon, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, testified that "non-profits are in the worst position because there is no way to raise enough income to meet rising costs. Pay raises alone represent a \$1 million annual increase in the Metropolitan's budget even when kept within the

recommended 7 percent." As Mr. Dillon pointed out, "inflation causes museums to pay more for less."

Ironically, the popularity of museums is at an all-time high. Attendance is estimated at close to 500 million persons a year and the services that museums can offer are increasingly in demand. The Committee appreciates the fact that larger numbers of Americans at all economic levels are becoming interested in seeing and learning about the works of art, historic objects, and scientific collections in our nation's museums. A recent survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics drew responses from 4,785 museums, of which 4,214 reported operating budgets of \$795 million total. Based on these figures, Lee Kimche, Director of the Institute, estimates that there are approximately 5,500 museums which qualify for Institute support.

The Committee believes that the General Operating Support, (GOS), grants provided by the Institute in its first two years of operation, have been a uniquely effective method of maintaining and improving museum services. It is also favorably noted that GOS funds have served to stimulate private contributions to museums rather than replace them. The Committee appreciates the fact that funds for general operating expenses are often the most difficult to raise and that they are essential to help meet the ongoing needs of our nation's museums. It is the belief of the Committee that the

GOS grants should continue to be the major thrust of the Institute's program.

#### PROFESSIONAL MUSEUM ORGANIZATIONS

In response to testimony presented to the Senate as well as to an informal study by the Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities, the Committee recommends that professional museum organizations be eligible for Institute support under certain limitations. The Committee defines a professional museum organization as a "non-profit professional museum-related organization, institution or association which engages in activities designed to advance the well-being of museums and the museum profession."

The Committee bill would limit this type of support to specific projects and would not allow funding for the general operating expenses of such organizations. In addition, the legislation would restrict all such support to one year periods and not more than five percent of the Institute's annual appropriation could be used for such purposes. It is expected that each application for project support would undergo peer review on its merits for its value to the museum profession.

By expanding Institute support to include professional museum organizations, the Committee recognizes the important services to the field which these organizations are often better suited to perform than the individual museums. Projects that benefit museums collectively can, in many cases, be more efficiently developed and operated by a professional museum organization. The Committee noted that organizations which serve museums have done an

excellent job of bringing dollars, resources, and people to museums, particularly to small museums which cannot accomplish these tasks alone.

#### GRANT REVIEW PROCEDURES

The Committee bill authorizes the Institute to establish its own grant review procedures. It recognizes that a different set of criteria may be required to review an application from the museum field than for the average grant made by its parent agency, the Department of Education. The museum applications to the two Endowments, for example, tend to be judged on a basis of competitive quality. These quality determinations are made by the judgement of peers through the use of the advisory panel system.

The Committee believes that museum applicants to the Institute should provide as full and accurate a picture of their needs as possible. In order to judge these applications against the Institute's published criteria, outside peer reviewers, like those used at the Endowments, may be essential. If the Institute staff and the Museum Services Board wish to, they have the Committee's approval to develop procedures that they believe will be the most effective and appropriate in reviewing applications. The Committee advises, however, that careful consideration be given to the cost of such an undertaking before it is begun.

## EXCEPTED PERSONNEL

Because the Office of Personnel Management has no series for museum specialists, the Committee bill would authorize the Director of the Institute to hire a limited number of experts in the museum field as excepted personnel. The Committee recognizes that certain specialists may be required from time to time to assist the Director in meeting demands placed on the Institute. Persons hired under this section may not exceed one-fifth of the number of full-time employees of the Institute.

## TWO-YEAR REAUTHORIZATION

The Committee has recommended a reauthorization period of two years. During this period, the Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities will examine all Federal programs that support museums. One objective will be to determine if there is duplication between programs and another will be to consider the proper location of the Institute of Museum Services. Recent discussion has prompted consideration of several alternative locations, such as the Smithsonian Institution, an independent agency parallel to the two Endowments, or the Department of Education, where it currently resides. In the meantime, the relatively young Institute will have time to strengthen its museum support programs and continue to develop into a strong and effective agency.

Although Section 413 of the Enabling Act which created the Department of Education provided that the functions of the Institute could be consolidated, altered, or discontinued, it is the sense of the Committee that the Institute should retain its identity unless that status is altered by statute.

The Committee believes that the authorized amounts in the legislation for fiscal years 1981 and 1982 show some fiscal restraint yet will permit a reasonable growth over the next two years. The figures set by the Committee are \$21.5 million for FY 1981 and \$28 million for FY 1982.

Mr. Pell. Mr. President, I am filing today the Report of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources concerning the reauthorization of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The current legislation expires as of October 1, 1980, and the legislation being reported extends the statutory authority for these agencies for a five-year period or until the fiscal year ending October 1, 1985.

The legislation is essentially a straight extension of existing programs with a few minor amendments in the Arts and one important provision in the Humanities that has been a priority of mine since the humanities program was established in 1965. And that is an option which will allow a State to establish a full-fledged Humanities Council as a legal entity of each State.

In order for a State to establish such an agency, a governor must first designate the humanities organization in existence on the date of the enactment of the Act. The State must then match from State funds 50 per cent of the minimum State grant (\$200,000) or 25 per cent of the total State grant, whichever is greater. The Governor may then appoint new members to the State Council as the terms of existing members expire. Moreover, funds must be used for programs which are designed to bring the humanities to as broad a public as possible, and must be newly appropriated. I want to emphasize my desire to see strong separate programs in the arts and humanities. I regard this as vital to the continued growth and vigor of both areas.

If a Governor does not meet the requirements detailed above, the State humanities programs will continue to operate as they do at the present time except that the Governor will be permitted to name four members of the committee instead of two. In addition, funds received by the State must be fully matched by funds from any source.

I believe that the first option will assist State humanities programs in becoming a full partner with State government - a status comparable to that of the State Arts Councils