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Claiborne Pell

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North End

August 19, 1982

The Honorable William J. Bennett
Chairman
National Endowment for the Humanities
806-15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20506

Dear Dr. Bennett:

I am very concerned to learn that you are contemplating abolishing the post at NEH concerned with the international aspects of the Endowment's work. You are, of course, entitled to administer the affairs of the Endowment in accordance with your own best judgement. But from my vantage point of responsibility in the fields of both foreign relations and the humanities, I urge you to reconsider.

The advent in 1978 of Endowment recognition of the international component of its responsibilities was greeted as highly useful by those interested in our foreign cultural relations. The result of that innovation has been a welcome increase, however gradual, in the prestige of the Endowment and of the humanities, both at home and abroad; a broader understanding of the work and aims of the Endowment; growth in the realization that culture includes the humanities as well as the arts; and positive specific contributions, such as the increased role of the Endowment (and through it, of the humanities in America) in our participation in UNESCO, where cultural as well as political voices should be heard.

Much of the credit for these achievements goes to Jim McCargar's experienced administration of these matters. I personally have felt reassured by his presence in the conduct of the Endowment's international problems and responsibilities, knowing that he would contribute effectively to maintaining the NEH role within the intent of and limits set by the Congress, while avoiding the pitfalls that abundantly dot the international scene. Jim McCargar has given distinguished service to the nation in the past, not all yet given the recognition it merits, and his service at NEH has been, in my view, outstanding.

With every good wish.

Ever sincerely,

Claiborne Pell

GC:pp