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## Reagan Administration: Funding Cuts News Articles (1981-1982): Letter to the Editor 01

Claiborne Pell

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## Humanities Endowment: The Broader Spectrum

To the Editor:

Your recent editorial on the National Endowment for the Humanities and my own involvement in the future direction of its policies requires some comment and clarification, if not correction.

The Times states that Dr. Ronald Berman, chairman of the Endowment from 1972 through 1976, "lost his job" because I was critical of his stewardship. This may leave readers with the impression that Dr. Berman was discharged. The truth, of course, is that the chairman of the Endowment is appointed for a set term of four years. Dr. Berman's term expired, and I opposed his reappointment because of basic disagreement with his administration of the program.

I believe the Humanities Endowment programs should reach out to involve a broader spectrum of the American people in the enriching process and products of humanistic studies. Dr. Berman was strongly opposed to my legislative proposals to accomplish this objective — proposals which were adopted in concept by the Congress.

This basic philosophical difference about the objectives of the humanities program is not a trivial matter to be brushed aside in considering whether the chairman of the Humanities Endowment merits reappointment.

Indeed, your own editorial states that diffusion of a product of humanistic studies to the nation is "a major duty of the Endowment," and one which "even admirers of Dr. Berman conceded he did not emphasize sufficiently."

Excellence in our national humanities program can not be achieved if

such major failings are rewarded through reappointment.

The Times is concerned that broadened participation in the humanities program will mean compromise on quality to gain popularity and ready acceptance. The quality and excellence of the programs sponsored by the Endowment must indeed be guarded. But I reject the implication that broadening the program beyond the narrow spectrum now participating in it will necessarily sacrifice quality.

The Humanities Endowment has not realized its full potential to provide opportunities for the enrichment of American life. To do so it must entice broader participation in quality programs.

That is my vision of the future of the Humanities Endowment and one which I believe the new chairman of the Endowment will share.

CLAIBORNE PELL  
U.S. Senator from Rhode Island  
Washington, Aug. 11, 1977