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Nomination Hearing (1985)

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## Curran, Edward: Humanities Chairman Nomination Hearing (1985): Speech 06

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✓ 1. Mr. Curran is not a member of the national humanities community in the sense that he seems not to have let his views on humanities issues be known and discussed in a public forum.

Has Mr. Curran published his views on the humanities, and if so where? In publications for the general reader, such as Atlantic? Harper's? New York Review? National Review? the op-ed pages of newspapers? or in specialized education and humanities journals?

2. Recently the question of censoring or controlling subject matter and point of view in NEA- and NEH-funded projects has been raised. We are therefore interested in Mr. Curran's opinion about this issue.

Are there projects the NEH now supports or has supported in the past that Mr. Curran thinks should not have received support?

Does Mr. Curran think that in the future the NEH should monitor or limit the content or point of view of the projects it funds?

If so, does he anticipate publishing descriptions of acceptable and unacceptable subjects and points of view so that applicants will know in advance of making applications?

Will completed NEH-funded projects be reviewed prior to their publication for appropriate content and point of view?

If Mr. Curran thinks the NEH should review proposed and/or completed projects for content and point of view, how does he propose to do this?

What criteria would he employ in conducting such reviews? Who would establish these criteria and review proposals and completed projects?

Does Mr. Curran think that such reviews at the time of application or before publication conflict with academic freedom? If so?

3. Because Mr. Curran lacks a record as a scholar, we are interested in his opinions about the peer-review process.

What does Mr. Curran think about the peer-review process?

What criteria does Mr. Curran think should be applied in the selection of panelists for the review of proposals in the Division of Education Programs? in the Division of Fellowships and Seminars? in the Division of General Programs? in the Division of Research Programs? in the Division of State Programs?

If he does not support the use of specialist reviewers, in which divisions of the NEH would he consider using non-specialists? What criteria would he use in selecting these reviewers?

In Mr. Curran's opinion, should the NEH endeavor to have women and members of minority groups represented on all panels?

In Mr. Curran's opinion, should the NEH see to it that women and members of minority groups serve on panels reviewing projects immediately relevant to these groups?

4. Four reports assessing the state of American higher education have been published recently. In key ways these reports differ from one another. We are interested in Mr. Curran's views on these reports and the recommendations they propose for improving higher education.

What does Mr. Curran think are the strengths and weaknesses of the report issued by the NIE, Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education?

What does Mr. Curran think are the strengths and weaknesses of the report issued by the Association of American Colleges, Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community?

What does Mr. Curran think are the strengths and weaknesses of the report issued by the NEH, To Reclaim a Legacy?

What does Mr. Curran think are the strengths and weaknesses of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Report on Higher-Education Policy, which appeared recently in the Chronicle of Higher Education?

Which of these reports is Mr. Curran most likely to be influenced by in the development of NEH programs?

Frank Newman asserts in the Carnegie Foundation report that "the American system of higher education is the best in the world." Does Mr. Curran agree with this statement?

What, in Mr. Curran's opinion, are the strengths and weaknesses in American higher education?

What does Mr. Curran think caused the decline in enrollments in the humanities in American colleges and universities during the 1970s?

5. One of Mr. Curran's responsibilities as Chairman of the NEH will be to "develop and encourage the pursuit of a national policy for the promotion of progress and scholarship in the humanities."

In 1978 the Commission on the Humanities recommended that "The NEH should increase its percentage of funding for elementary and secondary education, public programs on the humanities in elementary and secondary education, and research?" Does Mr. Curran agree with this recommendation?

What are his priorities with regard to the future funding of these three areas?

What initiatives does he plan to take in each of these areas?

6. In considering the reauthorization of the NEH, the ACLS submitted to Congress A Report to the Congress of the United States on The State of the Humanities, in which each of the learned societies reviewed the current state of its discipline.

How, in the light of these reviews, would Mr. Curran assess current interests of American scholars? Which of these interests would Mr. Curran encourage?

What, in Mr. Curran's opinion, are the weakest aspects of current work in American scholarship?

What role does he think the NEH should play in overcoming these weaknesses?

7. With the appointment of Edward Curran, for the first time in the history of the NEH, leadership will fall to someone who is not a member of the community of research scholars.

What, in Mr. Curran's opinion, are the special difficulties he will face because of this?

What, in Mr. Curran's opinion, are the special opportunities he will have because of this?