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November 2016

## Senate Speeches on the Arts and Humanities (1994-1996): Speech 15

Claiborne Pell

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#### STATEMENT OF SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL

Mr. President, the Arts Endowment provides support to non-profit organizations and individuals in dance, design and folk arts, literature, opera and other artistic endeavors. Before the National Endowment for the Arts came into existence, there were twenty-two professional theaters. Today there are four hundred and twenty. Before the Arts Endowment came into existence, there were 37 professional dance companies in this country, today there are nearly 300. There were 58 orchestras, today there are more than a thousand. There were 22 professional theaters, today there are 420.

The results of the Endowment also show themselves in the number of Americans who attend arts events. 15 million more Americans go to symphony performances each year than went prior to the NEA's establishment. Before the Endowment, one million people a year attended theatrical performances; today, fifty-five million attend.

Due to matching funds from state councils, community organizations and private donors, arts organizations now have the resources to present programs of extraordinary caliber and variety.

Thus, the Endowment has been very successful in making theater and the performing arts more accessible for Americans by encouraging such programs in traditionally underserved areas such as rural communities and inner cities. Since assuming the Chair of the Endowment, Ms. Jane Alexander has carried the message around the country that the Endowment is here to support cultural programs in all communities of our nation. The Endowment programs targeted by the cuts allow theaters and performing arts groups to keep ticket prices low and to offer educational programs and services for the disabled.

Mr. President, this tiny agency does an enormous amount of good for the nation, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.