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Claiborne Pell

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL

Mr. President, I fear that some among us have the misperception that the taxpayer dollars going to the National Endowment for the Arts are merely a charity, a handout. Nothing could be further from the truth. Arts activities are a significant economic bounty for this country, worth many billions of dollars to our economy every year. The arts fostered by the National Endowment encourage national and international tourism, attract and retain businesses in our communities, stimulate real estate development and contribute to the tax base.

Studies have shown that for every dollar the Endowment invests in the arts, there is created a tenfold return in jobs, services and contracts. San Antonio, Texas; Greenville, Mississippi; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Birmingham, Alabama are among the cities whose impact studies have shown the enormous economic contribution of the arts.

In fiscal years 1992 and 1993, Arts Endowment grants of approximately \$120 million each year drew matching grants of between 1.1 and 1.4 billion dollars. An estimated 1.3 million full time jobs are supported by the arts and \$25.3 billion is earned. From this income, local governments receive \$790 million in taxes and fees; state governments receive \$1.2 billion and the Federal government receives \$3.4 billion in income tax revenue.

Mr. President, the tiny proportion of the federal budget set aside for supporting the arts and culture in our society -- less than two ten thousandths of one percent -- is one of the foremost examples of federal investment in the U.S. economy. European nations understand this fact. At present, France provides \$32 per capita to the arts while Germany provides \$26 per capita. Here in the United States we spend approximately 65 cents a year for each citizen. Our funding for the Arts Endowment makes a statement to the world that the advancement of our culture is of importance for Americans. The same funding adds enormously to our economy. Conversely, such a cut in arts funding around the country will have a measureable negative impact. Mr. President, the benefits of the Arts Endowment are cheap at the price and I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.