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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR HUMANITIES: FY 97 DEBATE

FY 1995: \$172 M
FY 1996: \$110 M
Admin Request: \$136 M
House: \$104.5 M
Senate Cmte: \$ 99.5 M

The Senate Interior Committee's cut to NEH of \$10 million - 10% of the FY 96 budget - is a devastating blow. This comes on top of the \$62 million cut absorbed by NEH in FY 96. The Senate action means that over 2 years NEH will be cut by 43%.

In absorbing last year's cuts, NEH is truly down to bare bones. Last year NEH eliminated 31 grant programs. A further \$10 million cut means that NEH will have to eliminate entire categories of its core mission: forced to chose, for example, between teacher preparation -- summer seminars, teacher institutes and teaching with technology -- or presidential papers and editions of important American historical figures. At current levels, the ways in which NEH preserves our American heritage and shares it with the American people has been seriously weakened. For example:

PRESERVATION:

NEH has been the acknowledged leader in the national effort to preserve historical materials that are an important part of our cultural heritage. One of NEH's goals has been to preserve 3 million books in 20 years which are being destroyed by the "slow fires" generated by the acidic content of their paper. As a result of the FY 96 budget cuts, 20,000 fewer books will be saved in one year alone.

NEH is also preserving historically significant newspapers, with a statewide project in all fifty states. However, due to budget cuts, 230,000 disintegrating pages of newspaper which tell us so much about the history of local areas will be lost forever.

PRESIDENTIAL PAPERS:

The Editions Program at NEH supports scholarly editions of the writings of Presidents and other major historical figures who comprise our american legacy. NEH currently has 40 ongoing editions projects, including:

- The Papers of George Washington
- The Papers of Thomas Jefferson
- The Papers of Benjamin Franklin
- The Adams Family Papers
- The complete official record of the First Federal Congress
- The Papers of James Madison
- The Lincoln Legal Papers
- The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant

The Papers of Dwight Eisenhower
The Papers of Thomas Edison

Federal support for these projects is central to their survival because past efforts have shown they are not glamorous enough to attract private dollars. Due to NEH's budget cuts, most of these projects will not be completed because NEH only has funding to complete a few.

EDUCATION:

In the summer of 1995, summer seminars and institutes for high school and college teachers were attended by more than 2,600 teachers. Over 400,000 students were taught by these teachers who had better mastery of subject area, and greater enthusiasm for teaching after participating in this program.

Funding for teacher preparation in FY 95 was \$15.1 million. In FY 96, funds were cut to \$8.1 million, reducing the number of teachers NEH supports to 1,400 teachers, who in turn will reach 220,000 students - almost half as many as before.

MEDIA:

NEH films have afforded millions of Americans the opportunity to further explore America's past, reminding them of the great achievements and struggles that have made us who we are today. Films supported by NEH include:

- The Civil War
- Baseball
- Huey Long
- FDR
- Eisenhower
- LBJ
- George Marshall and the American Century
- The Life of Frederick Douglas: When the Lion Wrote History
- The Great Depression
- One Woman, One Vote

Upcoming films in the fall include: The West, Ken Burns's film on the history of the west, The Great War, a 12 hour series on the history of WWI; and TR, the biography of President Teddy Roosevelt. Last year, NEH's media budget was \$10.5 M, this year, the budget has been reduced to less than \$4 M. This cut will greatly reduce the number of quality, educational films available on free public television, and is a loss to the American people of untold proportions.

National Endowment for the Humanities

Decline in Buying Power Since FY 1979

