Legislative History of the Reauthorization of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) (1990): Report 11

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H.R. 2694, to amend title II, District of Columbia Code, to remove gender-specific references (H. Rept. 102–704);

H.R. 5622, to authorize an additional Federal contribution to the District of Columbia for fiscal year 1993 for youth and anticrime initiatives in the District of Columbia (H. Rept. 102–705);

H.R. 5623, to waive the period of congressional review for certain District of Columbia acts (H. Rept. 102–706);

H. Res. 527, providing for the consideration of H.R. 5620, making supplemental appropriations, transfers, and rescissions for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1992 (H. Rept. 102–707);

H.R. 5677, making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1993 (H. Rept. 102–708);

H.R. 5678, making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1993 (H. Rept. 102–709);

H.R. 5679, making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1993 (H. Rept. 102–710); and

H.R. 918, to modify the requirements applicable to locatable minerals on public domain lands, consistent with the principles of self-initiation of mining claims, amended (H. Rept. 102–711, Pact I).

Pages H6581–82

Interior Appropriations: By a recorded vote of 329 ayes to 94 noes, Roll No. 306, the House passed H.R. 5503, making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1993.

Pages H6453–73, H6474

Agreed To:

The Dicks amendment that earmarks $2 million for the design and the initiation of construction of a pedestrian walkway and interpretative park in cooperation with the city of Tacoma, Washington;

Page H6453

The Atkins amendment that prohibits use of funds made available in this act to record or process any claimed rights-of-way under section 2477 of the Revised Statutes;

Page H6455

The Jontz amendment, as amended by the Dicks amendments (agreed to by a recorded vote of 212 ayes to 206 noes, Roll No. 302), that reduces the appropriation for the National Forest System by approximately $8 million;

Pages H6457–63

The Stearns amendment that reduces the appropriation for the National Endowment for the Arts by $3 million (agreed to by a recorded vote of 251 ayes to 171 noes, Roll No. 304).

Pages H6467–69

Rejected:

The Thomas of Wyoming amendment that sought to strike language that deducts $155,275,000 from Federal onshore mineral leasing receipts prior to the division and distribution of such receipts between the States and the Treasury;

Pages H6453–55

The Duncan amendment that sought to reduce the appropriation for the Bureau of Indian Affairs by $34,009,000 (rejected by a recorded vote of 135 ayes to 266 noes, Roll No. 301);

Pages H6455–57

The Walker amendment that sought to strike $25,805,000 for fossil energy research and development (rejected by a recorded vote of 158 ayes to 262 noes, Roll No. 303);

Pages H6464–66

The Burton amendment, as modified, that sought to reduce by 1 percent each amount appropriated in the bill that is not required to be appropriated or made available by a provision of law (rejected by a recorded vote of 197 ayes to 218 noes, Roll No. 305);

Pages H6469–71

The Young of Alaska amendment was offered but subsequently withdrawn that sought to reduce the National Park Service construction budget by $5,558,000.

Page H6463

The Clerk was authorized to make technical and conforming changes in the bill.

Page H6474

Privilege of the House: H. Res. 525 was offered, but subsequently withdrawn, relating to the privileges of the House.

Pages H6475–78

Privilege of the House—Public Disclosure: By a yea-and-nay vote of 223 yea to 196 nays, Roll No. 307, the House agreed to the Kleczka motion to table H. Res. 526, relating to the privileges of the House.

Pages H6479–87

Cable Competitiveness: By a yea-and-nay vote of 340 yea to 73 nays, Roll No. 313, the House passed H.R. 4850, to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide increased consumer protection and to promote increased competition in the cable television and related markets.

Pages H6497–H6544, H6544–71
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

H 6467

July 23, 1992

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. STEARNS

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk reads as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. STEARNS: Page 25, strike lines 3 through 28 and insert the following:

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

GRANTS AND ADMINISTRATION

For necessary expenses to carry out the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, as amended, $145,829,000 shall be available to the National Endowment for the Arts, of which $3,300,000 shall be available for purposes of section 9(k): Provided, That this appropriation shall be available only in amounts as may be equal to the total amounts of gifts, bequests, and devices of money, or education accepted Chairman or by grantees of the Endowment under the provisions of section 10(a)(2), subsections (a)(2)(A) and (a)(3)(A) during the current and preceding fiscal years for which equal amounts have not previously been appropriated.

Mr. STEARNS (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read and printed in the Record.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. OBERSTAR). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Chairman, I rise to reduce the funding level for the National Endowment for the Arts to the fiscal year 1992 level. The committee has provided an increase of almost $3 million to the NEA. With our deficit approaching the $2 trillion mark, Federal programs taking tough budget cuts, I do not believe we can justify such an increase.

In the past several weeks we have cut housing and facilities for our Armed Forces, we have eliminated funding for the superconducting super collider, we have cut our legislative budgets—yet we are going to increase funding for the NEA?

As Representatives of the people, we have to explain our spending practices to our constituents. They will ask why the NEA received more funding than breast cancer research last year. They will ask why we are increasing its funding by almost $3 million during a severe budget crisis. How do we explain such inequity and lack of priorities to my constituents in central Florida?

This body has just debated an amendment from the gentleman from Illinois that would have cut all funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. The amendment, but believe some very good points were made by the other side.

My amendment will not dismantle the NEA—it will not cripple it. What this amendment will do is keep spending at last year's funding level which was a generous $178 million. Frankly, I think that is too much, however, the reasons for my colleagues have voted otherwise.

What my amendment does is provide a compromise. It provides the opportunity for both supporters and opponents of the NEA to vote for fiscal responsibility without devastating the organization.

Both the National Taxpayers Union and Citizens Against Government Waste have expressed their strong support for this amendment. They think it is the least we can do given the enormity of our deficit.

When American businesses and families are cutting back across America, it is the duty of Congress to cut back as well, that is $3 trillion. We have to ask ourselves "Is this an increase of almost $3 million to the NEA absolutely necessary?"

Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleagues for their understanding.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Is there a Member in opposition?

Mr. YATES. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Illinois [Mr. YATES] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. YATES. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Montana [Mr. WILLIAMS].

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise to explain our funding priorities, so let me explain what will likely be cut by this amendment.

Mr. William, not authorized, in a tumultuous session, the National Endowment for the Arts in the previous Congress, this House asked for two significant changes: First, arts education, and second, an earmarking of 35 percent of the money for the coming year for the States. That is, each State arts council would decide how that arts money is to be spent.

If this $3 million cut goes forward, the way it will trickle out is that your States, which now believe they are going to receive $3 million in additional money, are going to be out. Your States’ arts councils are going to be out if this amendment comes forward.

The other place that I anticipate this cut and I agree with the gentleman from Florida, I believe that amendment, but I do not believe we can justify an increase in NEA funding by almost $3 million during a severe budget crisis.

So do not let anybody tell you that this cut somehow has to do with all of that controversy that went on 2 years ago. This cut has to do with money for your State arts councils and arts education that goes on your schools.

I could list, if time permitted, all of the arts education that has done wonders for kindergarten kids, second, third grade, junior high school students in each of your States. We are about to cut if this passes, at least in my judgment, $1.5 million out of arts education for kindergarten kids, fire, police, kids.

This is not money that goes directly to artists. This is money that your school children enjoy in your States.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMYET]

Mr. ARMYET. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman, let me pay my respects to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. STEARNS] for bringing this amendment forward, and let me pay my respects to the distinguished chairman of this subcommittee [Mr. S'BABN]'s staff, the gentleman from Florida, Mr. YATES, a person whom we have contested over this issue for many years, and with whom the contest has always been very, very enjoyable. But the previous speaker, the gentleman from Montana [Mr. WILLIAMS] basically gave us a false predicate.

The predicate is that our education for our Nation’s youngest will be somehow diminished if we do not have this additional funding for the NEA. This has been a fundamental problem with the whole question of the NEA throughout all of the controversy we have ever had.

It is not about to the aesthetic tastes and the esthetic preferences and the esthetic pursuits that come natural to the people and to especially the children of this Nation for us to argue that art education is going to survive without this Federal funding. The fact is people love art, and they will pursue art, and they will most likely do it more enthusiastically, with less confusion if they are left to do it on their own, and if we do not have a Federal agency of the United States determining for the people of this country what is and what is not preferred artistic pursuit for those people.

This agency’s existence is an affront to the concept of freedom of expression in the arts. This agency’s existence that exists for the purpose of determining what is or is not art to be pursued by the American people.

Let me just say finally the gentleman’s last focus is not correct. His point is in this Nation of $400 billion deficits where we have to make so many difficult cuts, can we afford to increase spending on what is needed least and what is desired even less, an unnecessary intrusive agency of the Federal Government.

Mr. YATES. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 1 minute.
Mr. Chairman, I just want to tell the very distinguished Republican, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARNOLD], what another distinguished Republican thinks about the NEA. I am referring to Mr. Winton Blount, the former Postmaster of the United States, who added to his words in testimony during our hearing:

An NEA Investment of $35,000 in the Alabama Shakespeare Festival this year is helping create a new Southern artistry. Thoughtful, professional theater for hundreds of thousands, generate 116 million in tourism and educate 65,000 students. Where else do we see such Federal dollars being spent... for a large part of the effect and enormous ultimate value? Any businessman would be happy with a fraction of such returns on their investments. I therefore trust that you will continue to invest precious Federal resources where such a high and valuable return is achieved.

That is from Postmaster Winton Blount.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 15 seconds to say that giving in the United States of America by private funding of the arts has reached $7.98 billion last year. This is just a pitfall.

We will still have art education. Neither Mark Twain nor Ernest Hemingway received funding from the Government. Many of our greatest artists have contributed to the cultural development of our society without the support of Federal funds.

Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance of my time to my colleague, the gentleman from California [Mr. DORMAN].

Mr. Chairman, just very quickly, we are going into debt, this House is putting the Nation into debt $1,565,000,000 today, tomorrow, Sunday, every religious holiday right through this fiscal year. We just cannot afford not to cut something out of this.

I rise in support of the Stearns amendment. Madonna signed a contract for $15 million, Mike Jackson for another $20 million. This is just a fraction of the two-thirds of this budget. These people are not going to pay storage on their money. Let the artists making these incredible, astronomical incomes, let them help and pick up a little slack. We cannot afford it.

Mr. YATES. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. KOSTMAYER].

Mr. KOSTMAYER. Mr. Chairman, 30 years ago John Kennedy said that one of the most important things and the strength of our society is not only by measuring the strength of our military, but by measuring our commitment to the arts, to dance, to literature, to sculpture, to poetry, to painting, to music. By that measurement, this country does not have a very deep commitment to the arts.

This amount the gentleman from Florida seeks to cut is about 7 hours of Pentagon spending. This is one of the finest, most important, commitment. It sustains some of the very best impulses of people, young people especially, all across the country.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to do more to promote this program, to promote the concerns of people who care about literature, dance, painting, sculpture, poetry, and all the arts. This is a modest commitment to sustain such programs in small towns, big cities, and schools across the country. Surely the Congress can sustain and support the arts. I urge rejection of the amendment.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Chairman, I just want to point out to my colleagues, the highest rated public broadcasting show was the Fourth of July concert on the Mall, and hundreds of thousands of people were there. It was a great program, and it was funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Mr. YATES. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Ohio.

In conclusion, I merely want to reiterate what the distinguished gentleman from Montana [Mr. WILLIAMS] pointed out, and he should know what I am talking about because he wrote the authorizing legislation for the National Endowment for the Arts. As he pointed out, any amount of money made available above $175 million goes for two purposes. First, it goes for arts education for our children in this country, which is important at this time when so many of the local schools are cutting back on their arts and music programs. Second, the balance of the funding will go to sustain the programs of our cultural institutions in the States.

So I hope that the Stearns amendment is voted down.

Mr. WEISS. Mr. Chairman, I want to express my opposition to the Stearns amendment. This amendment does not signal fiscal prudence but an attempt to straddle an agency that is given the mission of funding every type of artistic group throughout the Nation and promoting American creativity and culture.

The NEA's work in promoting the arts is not favorable to the growth of our national identity and soul. On a purely pragmatic level, they are also our greatest export, an important means to local economic development, and one of the greatest educational tools for our children.

NEA funds comprise one one-hundredth of 1 percent of the current budget. For this tiny sum, the NEA funds generate 10 times that amount in private funds. For instance, for fiscal year 1991, NEA Program grants totaling $140 million generated $1.13 billion in non-Federal funding. This is an enormous return on Federal dollars.

More so, they play a real and vital role in community vitalization, and thanks to the ingenuity of NEA initiatives and the committed work of those in the arts, they affect at-risk students, the elderly, the physically challenged, and every aspect of the community.

The argument is made that we cannot afford the arts in these times. I would assert that the arts are more important than ever. At a time of racial and class division in our cities, the arts are one of the most effective ways of bridging this gap.

The $3 million which Mr. STEARNS seeks to cut is an increase that will, on the whole, go to arts in education programs. Is that the gentleman's intent, to do away with a small increase for funds for arts programs for our children?

If that is not the intent, then this amendment is a false gesture, one which will affect the quality of life of our citizens and hamper an agency given the task of reaching out to our organization in every corner of this country and developing and preserving our national culture.

I urge the defeat of the Stearns amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. All time has expired.

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida [Mr. STEARNS].

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were--aye 201, no 171, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 306]
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BURTON OF INDIANA

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment, offered by Mr. Burton of Indiana: Pages 97, after line 5, insert the following new section:

Sec. 818. Each amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act that is not required to be appropriated or otherwise made available by a provision of law is hereby reduced by 1.46 percent.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Chairman, I want to congratulate the previous speaker for getting an amendment passed that reduced spending to last year's level. It was not that hard. I moved to cut the spending, cut to live within the budget that we passed last year, the spending limits of last year.

Every single appropriation bill that we have passed this year so far, in total, has been higher than last year.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. Mr. Chair. 

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. This year's spending is $3.5 billion above last year; District of Columbia bill is $58 million above last year; Treasury, Postal Service, $2.9 billion above last year; and this bill is going to be close to $185 million above last year.

Now, what my amendment does is cut the spending in this bill back to last year's spending levels, as the previous amendment did for the National Endowment in the Arts.

The reason I think this is important is because of the statistical information on the two charts I am going to show you. There is a book that I have been talking about called "The Coming Economic Depression," and a man named Burkett, that I have been asking all of the Members to read. If any of you want a copy of it, I have in my office and I am glad to give you a copy.

Mr. Chairman, in that book it shows a chart put out by the Federal Reserve Board showing the progress of the national debt. This was the national debt in 1980, we are at $4.077 trillion in debt right now. This is where we are going to be, conservatively, comparatively, by the year 2000, or 7.5 years from now.

Now, what this means simply is—take a good look at that, $3.5 trillion—it means that the interest alone on the national debt is going to be $1.3 trillion, which is almost the total cash revenues we are bringing into the Treasury today. Very simply, it means we are not going to bring in enough taxes just to pay the interest on the debt, and without Medicare, Medicaid, social security, and all of the other problems facing this country.

So we have to get control of our appetite for spending. A good place to start is to freeze spending at last year's spending levels. In addition to that, I have said it before and I will say it again and again and again, we have to address the problem of entitlements. I know that is a dangerous thing to say, politically, but the fact of the matter is if we do not slow the growth in entitlements, the people on fixed incomes, on welfare and so on, 7 1/2 years from now will be paying $25 or $35 for a loaf of bread.

Now, why do I say that? I say that because the Federal Reserve Board has the right to monetize the debt. And if we cannot get enough tax revenues to pay the interest on the debt, we are going to have to pay off part of the debt, a large part of it, and they will monetize maybe $16 trillion or $26 trillion in debt.

When they print that much money, we are going to have hyperinflation and the people that we really want to help in this country, people on welfare, people fixed incomes, are going to be the hardest hit.

So we have to pinch a little bit now so we do not face hyperinflation later, which will cause economic chaos later in this country.

I will say it one more time: All I am asking for is a reduction in this bill to last year's spending levels, to try to get control of spending now and in the future so we will not face hyperinflation down the road.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. REGULA. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to, for the record, point out that we have already cut $59 million out of budget authority by the amendments which have been adopted. So, in effect, the gentleman's amendment would take us below last year's level because we were at $135 million over last year on the BA, with $59 million we have cut on thus far by amendment action and in reality—I do not know if the gentleman would want to modify his amendment—but it does in fact take us $59 million below last year's level.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I would be very happy, in accordance with my colleagues, to modify my amendment to take it down to last year's spending level, and I would so move, Mr. Chairman.

the CHAIRMAN. Does the gentleman ask unanimous consent to modify his amendment? And if so, he would modify his amendment in what way?

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Just to take it down to last year's levels, not below last year but to last year's spending level.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. The Chair would ask the gentleman to specify a change in the actual percentage level in the bill.

Mr. YATES. Mr. Chairman, reserving the right to object, we would like to have specific numbers.