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William B. Brennan Jr.

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Florida endowment for the humanities

A State Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities

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WILLIAM B. BRENNAN
Tampa

12 July 1979

Betsy McCreight, Chair, Humanities Foundation of West Virginia
Vice Chair, Federation Executive Committee
Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities
15 South 5th St. Suite 720
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402


Dear Betsy:

Dan Rutenberg, our new Chairman, Betty Metcalf, our former Chairman, and I have reviewed your report on reauthorization of July 6, 1979, and, in response to your request for information, we would express the attitude of the Florida Committee as follows:

Florida likes the idea that a new funding formula might begin to recognize more adequately the size of the population as a major determinant in the size of the grant to state humanities programs, and supports a move in this direction. While we believe that small states should have higher per capita funding than large ones, we also believe that the differential in the past has been far too large. Consequently, we support the OMB proposal insofar as it relates to population.

Florida has grave misgivings about increasing the discretionary authority of the NEH Chairman to 50% of the total grant, especially since the standards according to which this discretion would be employed have yet to be spelled out. We would strongly prefer that the Chairman's discretion continue to be limited to 25%, and that the other 25% be tied directly to population as the only criterion. Since state committees exist precisely because of the impossibility of adequately assessing from a single national perspective the priorities, opportunities and resources of each state, Florida would support careful examination of the possibility that the full 50% should be awarded solely upon the basis of population. We do not believe that the awards to states from Federal tax dollars of all citizens should be in any way contingent upon willingness of state governments to make matching awards, and we would oppose this portion of the OMB plan. States already provide 100% match from state resources for their grants, and this should be sufficient.

Florida appreciates Senator Pell's concern to root state programs in state government in order to achieve accountability and visibility. Nevertheless, Florida feels that other priorities are more important, especially the insulation of humanities inquiry from governmental influence beyond the demands of accountability. We feel that accountability is well provided for through the 1976 legislation, and that this legislation should be given time to produce its full results.


William B. Brennan, Jr., Executive Director