1985

Curran, Edward: Confirmation Hearing (1985): Correspondence 14

W. Nelson Francis

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4 October 1985

Senator Claiborne Pell
Senate Office Building
Washington DC

Dear Senator Pell:

I am writing you again concerning the nomination of Edward Curran for the position of chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. It seems to me that his resume, though it shows that he has held some important positions, indicates that his training and experience are totally irrelevant to the functions of NEH. In the first place, he holds no doctor's degree, though most of the people with whom he will be dealing are Ph.D.'s or Ed.D.'s. There is no evidence that he has any knowledge of the kind of scholarly activity that the Endowment supports. He does not seem to have published anything himself. His experience up to 1980 was wholly in secondary schools. Since 1980 he has held various administrative posts in the Reagan administration. His memberships are all in secondary school organizations; he is not a member of the Modern Language Association, the Linguistic Society of America, or any other scholarly organizations in the Humanities. In short, on the record he is totally unqualified for this important position.

I may point out that I have a particular interest in the NEH. I have been a senior research fellow of the Endowment, have done research under grants from it, and have acted as referee for many proposals for it. It needs a director who is himself a mature scholar, with informed experience in humanities research. I trust that you will use your influence to encourage such an appointment.

Sincerely yours,

W. Nelson Francis
Emeritus Professor of Linguistics

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