

1973

Museum Services Act (1973): Correspondence 20

Claiborne Pell

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July 19, 1973

Honorable Henry M. Jackson
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Scoop:

Stephen Wexler, my Counsel to the Special Subcommittee on the Arts and the Humanities, has informed me that he has recently received a letter from you. Enclosed was a copy of a letter and a statement submitted to you by Kenneth R. Hopkins, Director of the State Capitol Museum, Olympia, Washington, regarding S. 796. You may be sure that both the letter and the statement will be put in the hearing record.

One of the matters covered in the hearing was the question of help to small museums, and I know that Mr. Hopkins' letter and statement will be of assistance to our Subcommittee in its work.

Ever sincerely,

Claiborne Pell

SJW/nerp
enclosures

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JERRY T. VERKLER, STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

July 16, 1973

Mr. Steve Wexler
Suite 4230
Senate Labor and Public Welfare
Education Subcommittee
Washington, D.C.

Re: Please consider these comments regarding S. 796

Dear Sir:

The enclosed is respectfully submitted to you
for every proper consideration.

Please provide me with a report in duplicate
and return the enclosure to me with your response.

Sincerely yours,



Henry M. Jackson, U. S. S.

HMJ: mw
Enclosure

STATE CAPITOL MUSEUM

KENNETH R. HOPKINS
DIRECTOR

211 West 11th Street
Olympia, Washington
98501

13 July 1973

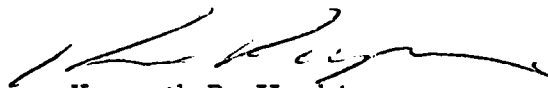
Honorable Henry M. Jackson
137 Old Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Jackson:

In regard to the Museum Services Act, S. 796, being heard by the Senate Special Subcommittee on Arts and Humanities, I would like to draw your attention to the viewpoint of this museum that is outlined in the attached statement.

With all good regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,



Kenneth R. Hopkins
Director

KRH:cl

enclosure

cc: Senator Claiborne Pell
Representative John Brademas

Statement by Kenneth R. Hopkins, Director, State Capitol Museum, Olympia, Washington, concerning the S. 796 Museum Services Act, introduced by Senator Pell, February 7, 1973

This museum takes the position that the Museum Services Act, as presently written, does not clearly represent the interests and needs of the small museums across our nation.

The vast majority of museums are "small," are "local" and reflect their communities in a direct and immediate way. In this regard, the small local museum differs from the larger urban museum in very real and specific ways.

It is false, we believe, to assume that legislation for museums as outlined in S. 796 will automatically assist all museums in equal proportion. What we believe is that there must be written into this legislation clear and adequate assurance that the thousands of small museums in this nation will be equally represented in the councils administering this legislation so that the small museums will have a voice in these councils proportionate to their numbers. We are discouraged at the proliferation of "help the museums" programs under various acts that are administered by representatives of the large and affluent museums, by government officials representing the large National Museum and by appointed officials whose background and experience is in these large urban institutions.

As the Director of a small museum for nine years, whose earlier career was entirely within the large urban museum structure, I can state unequivocally that the philosophy, needs and goals of the local museum and the large museum are different to a degree I would not have believed had I not had this experience.

We object to the "trickle down" theory and urgently request that specific details be written into this legislation to prevent this from occurring, as it will inevitably as the present act is written.

Therefore, we recommend that specific wording be included in S. 796 that would require that least one half of the members of the Board shall represent small museums

We recommend specific designation of minority representation on the Board.

We recommend that the funding be specifically earmarked in some reasonable proportion for small museums .

We recommend that the 25% matching requirement not apply to museums with annual operating budgets of under \$100,000 .

We recommend that the definition of a museum (Sec. 9) be changed to eliminate the term "utilizing a professional staff." Many small museums do not operate with a "professional staff," but with dedicated and often quite professional volunteers . We also feel that no reasonable definition can be made for "professional," except that the person be a paid employee and this can be a false picture, as a "professional" may be a volunteer and a paid employee may be quite "unprofessional." This situation would be particularly true of any museum established by Indian people and operated by them, in ghetto neighborhoods , by disadvantaged or minority groups , etc.

In regard to Indian, Black, Chicano, or other minority group museums , we feel this act is unconscionably negligent. There are no specifics in regard to such museums , yet here is an area of desperate need. This, we feel, proves our point that legislation such as this is written by and for the already affluent museum and with no regard for the grass roots, the minority, the ghetto, the local museum that serves disadvantaged, minority or other needy groups . We recommend a specific designation for minority members on the Board; for specific designation for funding for minority museums; and for specific designation for Indian museums .

It is our belief that the small local museum is the single most important institution in this country. It is the last of the "free enterprisers" in that its survival depends entirely upon the success or failure of its day to day, face to face, meeting with its immediate public .

It is closely aware of and receptive to the needs of the public it serves . It is usually governed and directed by members of this public who demand a direct response to community needs . If the local museum fails, there is no institution to take its place .

We urge the above changes in S. 796 . Without these changes, the act will be simply another federal program that will "pick up the tab" for the mistakes of the large institutions . What we hope you are concerned with is the positive impact museums can make on the American public . This is not a product of millions of visitors during tourist season, but is the product of the kind of personal, face to face program of the small museum throughout the year .

The philosophy of this museum is that 100 people actively involved in a museum experience is more important than 1000 people looking . It is our hope this is your philosophy, too .

We urge the changes proposed here in S. 796 and appreciate the opportunity to state our opinion .