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7-30-1979

## State Humanities Committees (1979-1982): Correspondence 23

Victor R. Swenson

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# VERMONT COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES AND PUBLIC ISSUES

Box 58

HYDE PARK, VERMONT 05655

(802) 888-1060

July 30, 1979

AUG 01 1979

Mr. Steven Weiland, Executive Director  
Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities  
15 South 5th Street, #720  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

Dear Steve:

Thank you very much for the July 6 packet of information on proposed changes in the 1976 law reauthorizing the National Endowment for the Humanities. It is a great help to have the NEH testimony and the Federation's interpretive material on the proposed changes.

I would like to express an opinion on the OMB proposal to change the NEH formula for funding state programs by enlarging over five years the Chairman's discretionary fund from 25% to 50% of the total allotment for state programs, and by empowering the Chairman to increase basic awards to states on the basis of (a) program quality, (b) levels of state appropriations, and (c) state population.

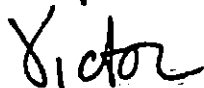
If this change were made and discretionary funds were awarded on the basis of state population only, the Vermont Council would stand to lose fifteen or twenty thousand dollars per year over the next five years, dropping from a basic grant of some \$313,000 in 1980 to \$224,000 in 1985. Such a loss of some \$89,000 would work a great hardship on the Vermont program and would be impossible to make up from local gifts and contributions. The larger, more populous states have a better opportunity than the small, rural states to expand their resources through fund raising from major businesses and foundations. It would at least seem reasonable if the funding formula is changed to hold the small states harmless by not reducing significantly their basic grants.

We do not see any objection to increasing the Chairman's discretionary funds or to awarding some portion of grant funds on the basis of merit. The possibility of raising state appropriations for the humanities, however, seems exceedingly remote in Vermont. OMB's proposed change in Gifts and Matching procedures seems excellent.

Letter to Steven Weiland  
July 30, 1979  
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Again, many thanks for full and timely information on these matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Victor".

Victor R. Swenson  
Executive Director

VRS/kmp

cc: Geraldine Pittman, Chairman