

University of Rhode Island

DigitalCommons@URI

Senate Speeches on the Arts and Humanities
(1994-1996)

Education: National Endowment for the Arts
and Humanities, Subject Files I (1973-1996)

November 2016

Senate Speeches on the Arts and Humanities (1994-1996): Speech 31

Claiborne Pell

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_82

Recommended Citation

Pell, Claiborne, "Senate Speeches on the Arts and Humanities (1994-1996): Speech 31" (2016). *Senate Speeches on the Arts and Humanities (1994-1996)*. Paper 48.
https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_82/48

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Education: National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, Subject Files I (1973-1996) at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senate Speeches on the Arts and Humanities (1994-1996) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu.

Statement of Senator Claiborne Pell (D,RI)
Gorton Amendment on History Standards

Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the amendment offered by the Senator from Washington. To my mind, this amendment is an unwarranted governmental intrusion into what is basically a private effort. It also constitutes micromanagement to a degree that is neither wise nor necessary.

First, the national standards that are being developed, whether in history or any other discipline, are purely voluntary. This was made clear in the Goals 2000 legislation and reinforced in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Second, the voluntary standards do not have to be submitted to either the National Education Standards and Improvement Council or the National Goals Panel. That, too, is voluntary. If the organization that developed the standards wants to submit them, they may do so at their own volition. It is not required.

Third, certification is nothing more than a "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval." It carries no weight in law, and imposes no requirements on states or localities. They are free to develop their own standards, and may use or not use the voluntary national standards as they wish.

Fourth, the History Standards in question are **proposed** standards. They have not been finalized. Quite to the contrary, representatives from the National History Standards Project have met with critics and have indicated their willingness to make changes in both the standards and the instructional examples that accompany the standards. Their commitment is to remove historical bias and to build a broad base of consensus in support of the proposed standards.

Fifth, make no mistake about it, these proposed standards were **not** developed in secret or by just a few individuals. They are the product of over two and one-half years of hard work. Literally hundreds of teachers, historians, social studies supervisors, and parents were part of this effort. Advice and counsel was both sought and received from more than 30 major educational, scholarly and public interest organizations.

Mr. President, I strongly believe that we should not interfere with a process that is still in play. We should not inject ourselves in a way that might impede both the important work being done in this area and the effort to develop of a broad base of consensus. Accordingly, I would urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment, and to support the substitute to be offered by the Senator from Vermont, Mr. Jeffords.