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Claiborne Pell

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STATEMENT BY SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL

Mr. President, I oppose this amendment. The Endowment's panel system is best calculated to bring to bear the talents and perspectives of experts and laypersons from communities around the nation. The high turnover rate among panelists now mandated is meant to ensure that the widest variety of values, and professional philosophies, reflecting the vast diversity in our nation and even in any given area of the arts, are given voice in the Endowment's funding decisions.

Mr. President, if we attempt each year to reconfigure the Endowment's procedures radically because one or two controversial grants have slipped through the process, we are far more likely to damage the Endowment's attempt to make appropriate funding decisions than to do it any good. Ms. Alexander has only been at the Endowment's helm for a short time, and I am of the mind that we need to give both her and the reforms recently instituted at the NEA more time to work effectively.