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NATIONAL MUSEUM ACT OF 1965

SEPTEMBER 9 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 8), 1965.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. PELL, from the Committee on Rules and Administration, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 1310]

The Committee on Rules and Administration, to which was referred the bill (S. 1310) relating to the National Museum of the Smithsonian Institution, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with amendments and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of S. 1310 is to give recognition to the Nation's museums as significant cultural and educational institutions and to assist the museum field by authorizing the Smithsonian Institution to strengthen its activities of service to other museums. Specifically, it would provide for cooperative and coordinated programs of museum training, research, surveys, and publications, to be carried out by the Director of the National Museum under the direction of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. Section 3 of the bill would repeal an obsolete reporting provision.

COST OF THE LEGISLATION

The Smithsonian has traditionally supported activities to benefit the museum community. Such activities are being carried forward on a modest scale. It is because they have proved so effective that this legislation is recommended. The Smithsonian estimates that the expansion of these activities, as specified in the act, would entail an annual expenditure of \$200,000. On the basis of comprehensive testimony presented at the hearing on this legislation, conducted on June 24, 1965, by the Subcommittee on the Smithsonian Institution under Senator Claiborne Pell's chairmanship, this investment is much needed and would prove of substantial value to the Nation's museums, now numbering over 5,000 and visited by Americans an estimated 300 million times a year.

AMENDMENTS

On March 1, 1965, S. 1310 was introduced by Senator J. W. Fulbright (for himself and Senators Clinton Anderson and Leverett Saltonstall) on behalf of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, of which these three Senators are members. On April 8, 1965, a similar bill, H.R. 7315, was introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Frank T. Bow, also a Regent of the Smithsonian. H.R. 7315 was drafted after representatives of the museum field had reviewed Senator Fulbright's bill, and reflects certain modifications of language deemed desirable.

Senator Fulbright's letter to Senator Pell, of June 23, 1965, printed in the hearing on this legislation and relating to the recommended changes in language, follows:

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
June 23, 1965.

HON. CLAIBORNE PELL,
Chairman, Subcommittee on the Smithsonian Institution, Committee on Rules and Administration, Senate Office Building.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: In my capacity as a Regent of the Smithsonian Institution, I am writing to express the hope that your subcommittee will give favorable consideration to the National Museum Act of 1965 (S. 1310 and H.R. 7315). These bills are the same in substance; but the language of S. 1310, the original version, was clarified and improved in several minor respects and these changes are reflected in H.R. 7315, introduced by Representative Frank T. Bow, of Ohio, on behalf of the Board of Regents.

Enactment of this legislation would give appropriate national recognition to the cultural and educational importance of the contributions of all our museums, throughout the country, to our society. It would authorize the Smithsonian to expand its activities of benefit to other museums in a program of research, training, publications, and service, to be coordinated and administered by the Director of the National Museum.

The Smithsonian has a long and creditable record of assistance to other museums and the museum profession, and it has the experience and ability to carry out the programs contemplated by these bills. Moreover, it is in keeping with the original purposes and respected tradition of the Smithsonian that it should pursue greater knowledge in these matters, wherever such knowledge may be found, and use its resources to make new discoveries and information available to the entire museum community.

Sincerely yours,

J. W. FULBRIGHT.

Similarly, Dr. S. Dillon Ripley, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, recommended in his testimony before the subcommittee the incorporation of the language changes found in H.R. 7315.

The committee endorses the validity of these changes and approved amendments bringing S. 1310 in these respects into conformance with H.R. 7315.

Specifically, a slightly revised section 2 was incorporated into the bill, giving an altered priority to the activities set forth in the legis-

lation, and adding improvements as are described in Dr. Ripley's detailed testimony as follows:

In the second paragraph we have made the wording of paragraph 4 of the Senate bill more explicit by saying "*prepare and carry out* programs for training career employees" and to do so "*wheresoever these may be best be conducted.*" This gives us an opportunity to collaborate with the museum, let us say, in California, and conduct the training program in California, if this seems appropriate. If the facilities are better there and if we can collaborate there, we would be glad to do it in a particular museum in some other area rather than in the District of Columbia.

Paragraph 3 is identical to paragraph 5 of the Senate bill.

Paragraph 4 is identical to paragraph 6 of the Senate bill.

Paragraph 5 of the House bill deletes the words "advise and" from paragraph 2 of the Senate bill, to make it clear that the authority to "cooperate with departments and agencies of the Government of the United States operating, assisting, or otherwise concerned with museums" is not intended to make the Smithsonian the sole official adviser for the museum field.

Paragraph 6 is a modification of paragraph 1 of the Senate bill, which in the original draft had called on the Director of the National Museum to prepare an annual report, which was loosely worded in such a way that he would have had to prepare a report on every museum in the country. The final paragraph of the House bill provides that he "shall report annually to Congress on progress in these activities," which is simply an annual report on the developments of cooperation and technical aid and training.

(In respect to the final paragraph of Dr. Ripley's statement above, it is to be noted that other reporting requirements for the Director of the National Museum are amended by sec. 3 of the bill as referred to conform with procedures now followed by the Smithsonian, whereby the annual report to Congress of the activities of the National Museum is incorporated in the annual report to Congress submitted by the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution on behalf of its Board of Regents.)

The committee also amended the bill to provide for a \$200,000 per annum limitation on the funding involved (sec. 2(b)). This limitation would apply to the new activities to be undertaken by the Smithsonian Institution pursuant to the provisions of this act.

OPINIONS OF WITNESSES

Indicative of the strong and widespread support for this legislation throughout the museum field in the United States, both from leading representatives of the museum profession and from museum boards of trustees, are the following statements excerpted from the subcommittee hearing:

John Nicholas Brown, Regent of the Smithsonian Institution:

There are hundreds, indeed thousands, of smaller institutions throughout the United States struggling to master museum techniques, such as conservation, cataloging, or-

ganization, display, who are greatly in need of help. The Smithsonian Institution is a great source for this help. Indeed, it has already rendered such help to the best of its ability.

As a regent of the Smithsonian, and as a man who has been especially interested in museums and their problems, I believe that (this legislation) would have a most beneficial effect on the whole development of museums throughout America.

Joseph Allen Patterson, director of the American Association of Museums (the association, founded in 1906, has more than 3,000 members and is the major professional organization representing the museum field throughout the country):

The Council of the American Association of Museums, made up of museum professionals and museum trustees, went on record at its 60th annual meeting convened in Philadelphia on May 25, as unanimously endorsing the proposed National Museum Act of 1965.

The entire museum field has felt the increased demands made upon it, and the decreasing funds to meet them.

The proposed National Museum Act will inaugurate a continuing study and consultation program for the development and strengthening of museums throughout the United States. The act specifically calls for training programs, publication of a wide range of museum handbooks and technical works, and a continuing survey and documentation of museum resources and needs. These services and the assistance envisaged in the act will enable museums to improve and enhance the quality and content of the programs they provide for approximately 300 million Americans each year.

The National Museum Act will enable the museum profession, with the assistance of other interested organizations and agencies, to take stock and determine the most effective means of providing professional solutions for museum problems. This will in no way detract from the museum tradition of decisions being made at the local level, or of the equally longstanding tradition of private and local financial support of the museum.

Edgar P. Richardson, director, Henry Francis Du Pont Winterthur Museum:

When I entered the museum field 35 years ago, there were 1,200 museums in the United States * * *. There are now 5,000. That is an enormous rate of growth * * *. Many, indeed most, of those 5,000 museums scattered over all 50 States, are small, their staffs have little or no training; their intentions are good but their resources are limited. They need advice and help in a thousand ways. To whom should they turn better than to the National Museum with its great scientific and technical staffs, and its great reservoir of professional knowledge and technical skill in the field?

Things are given to museums with the idea that they will be kept safely and preserved. The problems of preserving

old and fragile things made of wood, or paper, or leather, or feathers, or tortoise shell, or all kinds of other materials, are extremely difficult technical problems. Unless those objects are properly cared for they disintegrate. I would hate to think that giving something to a museum, however small, in the United States was merely giving it a one-way ticket to oblivion. But this can easily happen. There is a great need for training, for technical manuals and advice, for preservation laboratories staffed and well equipped.

John H. Kerr, director, Huntington Galleries, Huntington, W. Va.:

The National Museum Act proposes to provide a framework in which the Smithsonian Institution can enlarge its many services which it has traditionally provided upon request to museum directors and staff. This could go a long way toward maintaining high quality and guarding against the pitfalls of inadequate planning.

Our own State of West Virginia is undergoing a cultural awakening which could not help but be immeasurably accelerated within the framework of museum cooperation possible under the proposed National Museum Act of 1965.

Dr. S. K. Stevens, executive director, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission:

Pennsylvania now has a handsome and very complete museum in which to house and display its historical and artistic treasures. Although only a small part of our exhibit area is open at present, public response has been exceedingly good and visitation has risen beyond our most optimistic estimates. But I cannot stress too strongly the contribution made by the officers and staff of the National Museum. Nor can I overlook the fact that this contribution was the result of a voluntary, earnest desire on the part of the National Museum to be helpful.

Now that we have completed our building program and have acquired some measure of experience in these matters, we, in turn, are receiving many requests from other museums for help and guidance. But our own time is limited and our job a big one, and we can devote relatively little of it to helping others, much as we would like to do so.

The provisions of the act now being considered would be of immense help to us. The size of our staff will increase appreciably, but we have had and are having difficulty in locating suitably trained people to perform the demanding, expert tasks being asked of them. The need for training career employees in museum work is vital to the success of our museum program, and the act would definitely be beneficial in this regard.

Janet R. MacFarlane, director of the Albany Institute of History and Art:

If by strengthening the hand of the Smithsonian Institution, museums with limited resources can have the opportunity to receive technical advice and assistance on programs, we should support this bill.

The matters set forth as current plans for the Smithsonian, such as training, assistance in redefining purposes of museums, publication of scholarly essays and researches, require the counsel of those persons who understand the specific problems and requirements of presentation, of selection and maintenance of fine quality collections * * *. The support of an organization such as the Smithsonian is important to us.

S. Dillon Ripley, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution:

The Nation's accelerating growth presents a crucial challenge to the museum field to fulfill its necessary role in preserving and interpreting the cultural, technological, and natural history of contemporary life. An effective effort is essential to the progress of an informed and free society aware of its traditions and its present condition.

The last 15 years have witnessed a remarkable growth in the number, size, and activities of museums in all parts of the country. With over 5,000 museums now in existence, and a great many more in the planning stage, the museum profession has been unable to find or develop the trained personnel necessary for fully effective planning and operation. The immense potential of these museums as educational and research institutions which advance, not merely store, knowledge will only be realized by concerted programs for training, and for the dissemination of new skills and techniques throughout the museum community. There is a present and critical need for legislative recognition of this situation and encouragement of the cooperative studies and training which are the remedy.

The Smithsonian is well suited to providing a substantial measure of assistance to the museum field. The great scope of its collections and the variety of its exhibits have required a constant search for improvements in documentation, conservation, collection management, museum planning, exhibits techniques, and in the training of personnel for these functions.

For generations the name of the U.S. National Museum has been a byword in the museum field. In this year of the celebration of the bicentennial of the birth of James Smithson founder of the Institution, we ask the Congress to recognize the U.S. National Museum, not as an organization in a position of privilege, but as one able to be of service in helping to preserve our national heritage. Passage of this act will provide unmistakable evidence all across the Nation that Congress wishes to encourage the diverse and highly varied community of museums.

In summary, the National Museum Act of 1965 will give the Smithsonian affirmative statutory authority for a coordinated and continuing program of research, training, and service activities to stimulate progress and encourage excellence in the museum community as a whole.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that, from the standpoint of the administration's program, there is no objection to the enactment of legislation in the form recommended in this statement.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with subsection 4 of rule XXIX of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

FIRST PARAGRAPH UNDER THE HEADING "NATIONAL MUSEUM"
CONTAINED IN THE ACT OF JULY 7, 1884 (23 STAT. 214; 20 U.S.C.
65)

NATIONAL MUSEUM

For the preservation of collections of the National Museum: For the preservation and exhibition and increase of the collections received from the surveying and exploring expeditions of the Government, and other sources, including salaries or compensation of all necessary employees, ninety-one thousand dollars. [And the Director of the National Museum is hereby directed to report annually to Congress the progress of the museum during the year and its present condition.]

