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## Senate Speeches on the Arts and Humanities (1994-1996): Speech 38

Claiborne Pell

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## TALKING POINTS RE: INCREASED REQUIRED FUNDING TO STATES

- o Only a national arts endowment can ensure that progress in arts education, the recognition of folk arts, encouragement of cultural diversity, international arts exchange, etc. occurs evenly throughout the nation. Individuals and institutions in poorer states will always lose out in the absence of a strong national arts agency.
  
- o Many projects that have national or regional impact would not be funded. Endowment supported radio and television programs and major music and art institutions have national constituencies and require national support. Teaching fellowships and theater and dance groups that leave their big city stages and tour the country are examples of arts activities crossing state boundaries and therefore must be federally supported in order to survive.
  
- o Shifting funds to state administration reduces effective federal oversight and thereby reduces accountability. The huge number of grants awarded by the state make a close federal watchdog role over their grant actions impractical.
  
- o State funding for the arts has fallen by 28% in recent years. Clearly, the recent increase in funding given to the states by the 1990 amendment did little to leverage additional private funding of the arts in the states.

- o Administrative costs are lower at the national level, where economies of scale are greater. A percentage of NEA funds awarded to the states is spent on administering the state programs. We should be funding artists and art organizations with NEA funds, not bureaucrats and administrators.

- o NEA funds are essential in promoting production and distribution of copyrighted materials, including movies, home videos, books and other publications. This adds significantly to our national economic growth. Most state arts agencies play relatively small roles in these activities.

Examples of national arts programs showing why an increased percentage of funds to the states is not a good idea include:

- A. Television and Radio: Great Performances, The Metropolitan Center Presences, American Playhouse, Arts on Radio series including "Folk Masters from Wolftrap" and "Jazz from Lincoln Center"

- B. Theater: Spanish Theater Repertory Co. in New York City received a \$100,000.00 grant to perform in Spanish theaters around the country. The Company performed in 37 theaters, reaching more than 22,000 people in communities that had never seen theater before. The sites included Taos, New Mexico; Kutztown, Pennsylvania; Lancaster, California; and El Paso Texas.

- C. Dance: The Merce Cunningham Dance Company received a \$373,000 NEA grant. The company spent nearly a month in Minnesota and visited Moorhead, North Dakota four times to give classes to the public and performances., the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater toured throughout the south, performing in Greenville and Spartansville, South Carolina and Opelika, Alabama.