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## Briefing Book: National Endowment for the Arts (1994): Speech 30

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**INCREASING THE PERCENTAGE OF ENDOWMENT FUNDS TO STATES WILL DIMINISH THE ENDOWMENT'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE VITAL FEDERAL LEADERSHIP IN THE ARTS AND WILL IMPAIR PROJECTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE.**

o National leadership for the public and private sector could be diminished.

o Federal support for the arts is a catalyst for support by state and local governments and the private sector--foundations, corporations and individuals. In addition, The National Endowment's panel system gives non-federal grantors the benefit of panelists' expertise--their judgment on the artistic quality of projects--and on the significance of projects from a national perspective.

o Endowment discipline programs would cease to provide strong leadership for artists and organizations in the field.

o Direct federal support for projects in dance, design arts, folk arts, literature, museums, music, opera-musical theater, theater, visual arts, media arts and interdisciplinary arts, which are now funded in the form of competitive grants by the National Endowment's discipline programs, would suffer severe reductions should there be a further increase in funding to the states. The increase in the amount of Endowment funds going to the states in FY91 as a result of reauthorization legislation required cutting \$12 million from the discipline programs.

o The discipline programs provide fellowships to support the projects of individual artists. Some states are prohibited by law from directly supporting individual artists. And no corporations and few foundations award individual fellowships. As a result, a further shift of funds to the states would result in a severe reduction in funding for individual artists.

o Also, reducing support for competitive grants through the discipline programs would result in major losses for less institutionalized art forms such as folk arts, design arts, and literature and film, which do not always receive high priority at the state level. With the exception of a few states, state agencies simply do not have the infrastructure to support the media arts.

o National recognition and international leadership of the U.S. in the arts would be reduced.

o Only a national agency can provide national recognition for the most exemplary artists and organizations or identify and ensure support for all our national treasures.

- o National recognition of America's artistic excellence is important to preserve the American heritage as well as to promote the U.S. internationally and to continue America's leadership in the exchange of cultural, artistic, intellectual, political and educational ideas in the international arena.
- o Without a federal presence in the arts, the U.S. would be the only industrialized nation without national presence in the arts.
- o Support of America's cultural diversity would be diminished.
  - o Federal support for the arts ensures that America's diverse cultural heritage will be preserved. Without a strong federal presence in the arts, there would be no guarantee that all of the manifestations of America's cultural richness would be recognized and nurtured.
  - o Our representative democracy was founded on the principle that diversity had a major role to play in protecting individual liberty. In upholding this principle, the federal government is the only institution which can ensure that the multiplicity of cultures in the U.S. are given national recognition.
  - o The Endowment's panel system, in which all cultural and ethnic groups and individuals with diverse beliefs and aesthetic viewpoints are represented, embodies this democratic principle.
- o Touring and presentation of arts nationwide depends on sufficient funds in the discipline programs in the Endowment.
  - o Touring and presentation of arts nationwide would be severely curtailed without the national perspective, framework and development of processes necessary to circulate the arts throughout communities here and abroad.
  - o In accordance with its mission to increase the access of all Americans to excellent art, in FY93 the Endowment plans to transform one of its discipline programs into a Presenting, Touring, and Commissioning Program. This development could be threatened if there is not sufficient money for the discipline programs, which could occur if the amount going to the states is increased.

o Funding for projects of national significance could diminish.

o Further shifting funds to the states would have a particularly negative effect on activities with a national impact, such as filmmaking and broadcasting, touring, and major service providers. Such programs include the Dance Notation Bureau and archival collections with national and international holdings.

o In addition, state agencies cannot individually develop and support projects intended for a nationwide audience such as Dance in America, American Playhouse, or Great Performances.