

University of Rhode Island

DigitalCommons@URI

---

National Foundation on the Arts and  
Humanities (1965-1967)

Education: National Endowment for the Arts  
and Humanities, Subject Files II (1962-1996)

---

1-6-1966

## National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities (1965-1967): Speech 01

Claiborne Pell

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell\\_neh\\_II\\_54](https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_II_54)

---

### Recommended Citation

Pell, Claiborne, "National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities (1965-1967): Speech 01" (1966).  
*National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities (1965-1967)*. Paper 59.  
[https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell\\_neh\\_II\\_54/59](https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_II_54/59)

This Speech is brought to you by the University of Rhode Island. It has been accepted for inclusion in National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities (1965-1967) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons-group@uri.edu](mailto:digitalcommons-group@uri.edu). For permission to reuse copyrighted content, contact the author directly.

REMARKS OF SENATOR CLAIBORNE FELL, MEETING ADULT EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION, JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER, PROVIDENCE, JANUARY 6, 1966

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to have this opportunity to address the Adult Education Association of Rhode Island. Just as there has recently been an increasing awareness of the importance of education to our children, so too, have we realized that the Great Society can only be reached if our adult population is enabled to further its own educational opportunities, both formally and in a more informal manner as well. I should like to address my remarks this evening to the more informal aspect of this educational process--- to the new importance of leisure time activities.

Throughout our history America has been known as the land of the free. Traditionally these words have described our national heritage of independence. Today, however, we are a free people in yet another way...we have more free or leisure time than any people have ever had at any time or place on earth---and we are rapidly entering a new period when the whole concept of leisure will become increasingly important.

Creative and constructive use of this leisure can greatly strengthen our country. On the other hand, the misuse of leisure time can seriously undermine the very principles through which our country has flourished.

We have inherited in the United States the advantages and opportunities of freedom; and we have prospered to the point of abundance, with the highest standard of living of any nation in the world. We have reached the stage which combines freedom with abundance. But our goals are still before us. We can do much more for the cause of freedom, both at home and abroad. Indeed, freedom exists only when constant and renewing efforts are made in its behalf. Abundance has by no means yet reached the whole of our country.

As we continue to advance toward the goals we seek--- to preserve freedom and enhance the opportunities it implies, to bring abundance to increasing numbers of our own citizens and to developing nations beyond our shores---we must make certain that we do not slide backward into stages of selfishness and apathy, into self-satisfied indifference. As I'm sure you know, we need only to turn the pages of history to see the dangers inherent when a civilization or a society reaches a high living standard and overemphasizes the material, the luxurious aspects of life. We must ensure that no future historian can write a tome entitled "The Rise and Fall of the American People;" or that, in the latter part of the 20th century, the United States added to the old standbys of Reading 'Riting, and 'rithmetic--those standard 3-R cornerstones of

education---a fourth "R": namesly that of resting on our laurels.

You may well remark, however, that leisure is rest, that it implies rest. And so it does. We all need holidays. We need the supreme luxury of waking up on a holiday morning with the suddent realization that for a certain period of time our tasks are accomplished. But it must be a prescribed time--- it cannot be indefinite. Leisure is somewhat like a blank check based on the inner stimulation of the individual. It can refresh the very core of our beings; but it must be filled in and cashed; for if it is left lying idle too long, no amount we write in can revive its purpose.

To be properly used, then, lesiure must contain an element of discipline: an objective. If we wake up on too many consecutive mornings with nothing to do, we disintegrate as human beings. We lose the whole aim and purpose of life.

Leisure must refresh and stimulate not only our physical well-being, but most important, the intangible attributes and values of the human spirit. Leisure is, above all, a time of oppportunity. It means a temporary hald before we proceed anew.

The American spirit of enterprise has always been associated with hard work. Let us take a look at some of our national working averages, as contrasted betwen today and the past. A 35 hour work week has already been proposed by important labor

organizations. In some specialized cases, the work week is less than this. The national average is now approximately 40 hours per week. Contrast this with the 84 hour week once customary to the oldtime steelworker, or to the 56 hour working week common in the early decades of this century, when paid holidays and paid sick leave were unknown. These figures disclose that we have virtually cut in half the number of hours worked each week by our grandfathers.

Our grandmothers were similarly industrious. The chief labor-saving devices our grandmothers had at their disposal were---our grandfathers. Appliances such as the modern washing machines and vacuum cleaners we take for granted, had not yet appeared in the American household. Today 96 per cent of American homes have a washing machine and less than a quarter are without a vacuum cleaner.

Many things have changed, but the number of hours in a week has not. The total is still 168. We continue to need approximately 56 hours of sleep a week; we may eat with slightly greater rapidity, and sometimes with less formality, than did our ancestors, but we still take time to perform this necessary function. Our high-speed transportation systems get us to and from work more quickly than did the horse and carriage...although there are times in rush hours of traffic on our Washington

thoroughfares when I would gladly give up my automobile for the faster conveyance of a horse! No horse, however, with the possible exception of Pegasus, could compete with a jet airplane--- or with the high-speed passenger rail line which as you know I am seeking to effect between Washington, New York, Providence and Boston. And all things considered, a bit of simple arithmetic will reveal that we have more than 3 extra hours of leisure time per working day than we did 50 years ago. Figured out on a yearly basis, that comes to an extra month per year.

To project this hourly gain in leisure forward, it is estimated that by the year 2000, Americans will have a total of 660 billion more hours of leisure than they did in 1950. Some leading economists call this rather staggering figure highly unrealist----because it is too conservative! One recently published estimate forecasts that before another 25 years have passed, 2 per cent of our population will be able to produce all the goods and food which the remaining 98 per cent can possibly consume. If that should happen, leisure time would grow to truly astronomic proportions.

Automation and enormous industrial technological improvements are, of course resonsible for the increase in hours which can be used for leisure. To give you one graphic example, an automobile engine part formerly produced at the rate of 38 per hour by five

men and two machines is now produced by one man and one machine at the rate of 750 per hour. This constitutes almost a 200-fold increase in efficiency.

But automation is far from an unmixed blessing. Its geometric progressions of acceleration must be intelligently harnessed. Certainly we must not allow an efficient but dehumanized society to emerge by default. Certainly, we need something else besides pristine new machines and young men and women to run them into an ever higher spiral of prosperity. And certainly we need to know how best to utilize the 660 billion additional hours of leisure time projected for the year 2000. Here is where the concepts of culture and leisure are combined.

Throughout our land---because of the growth in leisure time, because of our preeminent standard of living and improving education---we are witnessing a great burgeoning desire on the part of our people to participate in activities related to cultural growth. This desire is wholly new in the breadth of its appeal; and it is of the utmost importance that we respond to it in the most enlightened way possible.

Just as we are on the verge of new scientific accomplishments, so are we on the threshold of a cultural renaissance, or in the words of Robert Frost, "a new Augustan age." A striking example exists in the fact that the number of museums which serve as

cultural centers in the United States has increased from 1500 to 5500 during the past 30 years. And these museums are now annually visited by close to 200 million people---more than twice the numbers who attend the American national pastime of baseball. Yet a great majority of these museums are struggling with financial problems, and there is a growing financial crisis throughout the whole spectrum of the arts in this country. Private philanthropy, on which we have traditionally depended to enhance cultural progress, simply is no longer adequate to meet the new demands.

That is why I was so gratified this fall when the Congress passed and President Johnson signed our bill establishing the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities. I believe that this bill is of historic significance to the cultural progress of our country. Almost alone among the major governments of the world, the United States until recently has displayed relatively little concern for the development and encouragement of the artistic and cultural resources of its citizens. The Arts and Humanities Foundation, to my mind, is the first major step towards developing a comprehensive and well-coordinated program of support for the arts and of implementing it and making it meaningful.

My own role in this endeavor has given me special gratification.

When I became Chairman of the Senate Special Subcommittee on the Arts, back in the 87th Congress, this legislation was far more a dream than a reality. During the 88th Congress the Subcommittee was continued under my Chairmanship, and we succeeded in establishing a National Council on the Arts under the excellent leadership of Roger Stevens. This was a significant beginning, although the Senate-passed bill of that time was broader in scope, providing both for the Council and a National Arts Foundation. The Foundation was not adopted by the House.

Early this year the Senate Subcommittee was retitled to include the Humanities, and I was privileged to serve as Floor Manager of the Senate bill which was passed last June, and which the House approved in every important respect in mid-September. By all odds, it is the most comprehensive and meaningful of its kind the Congress has ever considered.

Basically the structure of the new Foundation is simple and direct. There are two major branches--one for the Arts, the other for the Humanities. Each receives guidance by separate Councils of private citizens, 26 in number, experienced in the major art forms, or in the area of scholarly endeavors. Good fences make good neighbors was the premise we worked on. But the fence gates are open for all kinds of interchange of ideas and cooperation; and there is also abundant opportunity for purposely coordination

with related Federal agencies concerned with the arts or the humanities, or with both. The concept is one of partnership at a governmental level, and at the local and private level. The bill recognizes the primary importance of private and local initiative. It seeks to encourage these attributes. There is specific provision against Federal control.

In the field of the arts, matching grants will be furnished to non-profit groups and to the states for a broad range of projects and programs aimed at developing artistic excellence and bringing that excellence increasingly to widening areas of appreciation. Existing institutions will be assisted; new ones will undoubtedly come into being.

Each branch of the Foundation---the Arts Endowment and the Humanities Endowment,---is authorized to receive \$5 million in Federal funding annually. In addition, each state with an arts agency already established---and we have such an agency in Rhode Island---is eligible to receive up to \$50,000 annually for meaningful activities in the arts.

A major objective of the legislation is to encourage private philanthropy for cultural endeavors. For this purpose funds are authorized to each of the Endowments to match funds donated from private sources. The total annual Federal funding authorized for each Endowment is \$10 million---for the Arts,

the basic \$5 million, plus \$2.75 million for the states, plus \$2.25 million to match private giving: for the Humanities, the basic \$5 million and the added \$5 million to attract private philanthropy.

Thus, I believe we are on the threshold of broad new avenues for the cultural advancement of our country. The arts and humanities are closely allied partners. The arts have translated, over the long span of history, man's highest aspirations into tangible and abiding form. The humanities help us to understand what is best in art. They give us needed perspective---an ability to appreciate, and to evaluate. The Humanities Foundation, through a system of grants and loans for research, for fellowships, <sup>of</sup> support for publication of scholarly works, provision for the interchange of information, will foster understanding and appreciation of the humanities.

We are in conflict today with the materialism of totalitarian forms of government, which by definition stifle creative thought. We must contribute to the world something better than this, something more lofty, something in tune with free men, something to inspire them.

Let us make certain, therefore, that we make the best possible use of our own advantages. Let us make sure that we use our new leisure, our new free time well, and that the

working scholar, who can so immeasurably invigorate this newly-gained time for us all, is given the maximum climate for developing his or her creative and imaginative spirit.

If we do these things, we will give to the world a truly meaningful heritage. Together, let us work towards this goal.