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President Names 7 to NEH Panel

Recess Appointments to Advisory Group Assailed

By Norman D. Atkins

With the Senate out of town, the White House this week made recess appointments of its nominees for the National Council on the Humanities, though some of them, already under fire over their politics and credentials, had been expected to face questioning by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee before being confirmed.

Empowered by the Constitution to fill vacancies in public office when the Senate is in recess, President Reagan confirmed the appointments of seven members of the council, a 26-member panel that helps advise the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities on which proposals to fund from its \$140 million annual budget.

According to Mary Beth Norton, the council's retiring deputy vice chairman, Reagan made the recess appointments "because opposition was developing. It was done explicitly to avoid letting the Senate have a say in naming people to the council."

The 1965 law creating the NEH also established the advisory council, and the Senate panel has always approved the president's choices. But some senators, including ranking minority committee member Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), expressed their displeasure with Reagan's recent picks and had planned to investigate their qualifications.

News of the appointments, made Monday but not known about on the Hill until Thursday, caught some senators' aides by surprise. Some suggested the possibility of hearings later this month.

Former and current council members and people involved in the humanities nationwide have stirred the tempest over the Reagan appointees, characterizing

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ing':

'Salute to Lady Liberty':
TV Preview, D7.

APPOINTMENTS, From D1

them as a slate of right-wing political choices and as individuals who they say lack qualifications or demonstrable service to the humanities.

Bard College President Leon Botstein, the past president of the New York Council on the Humanities, last week called the list of nominees "outrageously bad" and criticized Reagan for "a catastrophic abuse of his obligation to solicit a wide variety of opinions for the council." Botstein said, "They all seem to have common conservative views ranging from abortion to prayer in school."

John Agresto, the NEH assistant chairman, however, said Thursday, "These appointees represent a good cross-section of American citizens and scholars, and we expect they will make a strong contribution to the National Council."

The appointees who have raised the most ire are Helen Marie Taylor, Mary Jo Cresimore and Kathleen S. Kilpatrick.

Reagan had nominated Taylor early last year for a seat on the board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, but withdrew her name after Sen. Barry Goldwater

Recess Appointments

is a professor of American history at Cornell University, said of Taylor: "She is qualified for the arts council, but not for the humanities council."

Said Norton, a self-described feminist, "It seems to me symbolic of what the Reagan administration is doing to the humanities council in general that the most vocal feminist is being replaced by a personal friend of Phyllis Schlafly."

Taylor said yesterday, "I do indeed feel we are all well-qualified and I think we are capable of making a significant contribution to the humanities council. I know I'll certainly try to." She added, "And I am honored to be a friend of Phyllis Schlafly."

Cresimore, of Raleigh, N.C., described herself on her resumé as a homemaker, civic leader and volunteer arts administrator. She has worked actively for the Republican Party for the past 20 years, founded the Raleigh Arts Commission and has been extensively involved with other local arts groups there.

Critics say she, too, would be bet-

the conservative articles it publishes.

Page Putnam Miller, director of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, said Kilpatrick is one of several nominees lacking academic credentials that will limit her ability "to contribute to the evaluation of scholarly proposals."

Kilpatrick dismissed her critics, calling their points about her politics and credentials "irrelevant." She said, "I've been appointed and am looking forward to serving on the council."

"On the face of it, there's nothing wrong with appointing people who are not credentialed academics," said Norton. "But Reagan's public appointments appear inferior to the ones made by Nixon, Ford and Carter. Although they didn't have academic credentials either, their commitment to the humanities was deep."

The other four Reagan appointees are academics: Robert Laxalt, William Allen, the Rev. James Schall and Leon Kass.

Kass, the Henry R. Luce professor of the liberal arts of human biology at the University of Chicago, has written extensively on the ethical and social implications of biomedical advances, especially right-to-life issues.

Miller points out the group includes "no historians, philosophers, English professors or foreign language scholars. None of the nominees is primarily grounded in any of the four key disciplines that comprise the humanities."

"This doesn't seem like the most natural group of academics to set off the non-academic appointees," said Richard Lyman, president of the Rockefeller Foundation and former vice chairman of the humanities council. He said it appeared that all of the appointees share similarly conservative views and political leanings.

"This is the most emphatically political slate of nominees I've seen yet," Lyman said.

White House assistant press secretary Anson Franklin defended the choices: "We feel these nominees are fully qualified." He said the appointments were made through the recess route because Reagan