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1984

# National Endowment for the Humanities: Council Reappointments (1984): Correspondence 02

Leslie Dretar Urgo

Joseph R. Urgo

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*The White House,*

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*To the*

*Senate of the United States.*

*I nominate*

the following-named persons to be

Members of the National Council on the Humanities for terms  
expiring January 26, 1990:

William Barclay Allen, of California,  
vice Charles V. Hamilton, term expired.

Mary Josephine Conrad Cresimore, of North  
Carolina, vice Louis J. Hector, term expired.

✓ Leon Richard Kass, of Illinois,  
vice M. Carl Holman, term expired.

Kathleen S. Kilpatrick, of Connecticut,  
vice Harriet Morse Zimmerman, term expired.

James V. Schall, of California,  
vice Leon Stein, term expired.

✓ Helen Marie Taylor, of Virginia, vice  
Mary Beth Norton, term expired.

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July 6, 1984

Senator Claiborne Pell  
U. S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

JUL 09 1984

Dear Senator Pell:

I have recently become aware of President Reagan's proposed nominees for the Council of the National Endowment for the Humanities. While the approval process for this slate of nominees is usually pro forma, I urge you and the other members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources to carefully consider the following, and, as a result, direct your energies towards finding and installing candidates who are representative scholars of the major disciplines that comprise the humanities.

Please remember that:

- a. Ms. Cresimore and Ms. Taylor are not members of any of the major learned societies and national professional associations that serve the humanities community. The leading national organizations did submit various qualified nominees, but these suggestions received little or no attention by the President's appointing staff.
- b. The NEH during the present administration has argued successfully for the need of true superiority in the awarding of grants. As this is the case, I should think that the humanities community has every right to insist on comparable superiority in the qualifications of members of the NEH Council.
- c. Most importantly, the slate of NEH Council nominees as proposed by the Reagan administration evidences an obvious effort to politicize the NEH to suit current Administration goals. For example, Leon Richard Kass is a widely-known Right-to-Life movement advocate, and Helen Marie Taylor is the State Co-Chairman of Virginia's Moral Majority League. The President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Richard W. Lyman, noted after reviewing the proposed slate of nominees that "the chief common thread seems to be working for the right-to-life movement." It is my understanding that the NEH's guidelines, as per its Annual Report, prohibits funding for "the promotion of any present political, partisan, or ideological agenda." Again, haven't citizens the right, indeed the responsibility, to oppose committee appointments which threaten these protective funding principals?

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I challenge you and your fellow committee members to press for a thorough review of the President's appointees to this Council, and to take the needed steps to eliminate such inappropriate or insufficiently qualified nominees both now and in the future. In light of the present situation, perhaps it is time for the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources to press for clarification of the rules pertinent to the NEH Council's appointments. One cannot be too careful, these days.

Thank you in advance, Senator Pell, for your help on this and related matters.

Sincerely,

*Lesley Dretar Urgo*      *Joseph R. Urgo*  
Lesley Dretar Urgo and Joseph R. Urgo

Teaching Fellows  
Brown University  
Program in American Civilization

home address: 119 Cole Avenue  
Providence, RI 02906

P.S. If I can be of any assistance to you in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address. *Lesley Dretar Urgo*