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Ronald S. Berman

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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20506

THE CHAIRMAN

December 3, 1975

Honorable Claiborne Pell
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

The auditors from GAO are now at the Endowment and we welcome the opportunity to have their careful scrutiny of our operations. We feel that their findings will indicate the quality of management at NEH.

My second purpose in writing is to share with you the results of a recent GAO inquiry which was made late last year. This review included both the Humanities and the Arts Endowments. A few points are worth mentioning.

GAO was gratified by the cooperation received during its review.

The GAO suggestions relative to the role of the two Councils has, within the limits of our Congressional mandate, been fulfilled.

The GAO suggests that the Endowment Chairmen control a larger percentage of the grant management and recommends that the Chairmen exercise more power in a more direct way. I think both you and I disapprove: we wish the Councils to have a maximum role in grant making as well as policy formulation. You have been particularly clear on that point and I strongly agree with you.

The next several points of criticism primarily concern the Arts Endowment. The Humanities Endowment appears to fare rather well with respect to having sufficiently developed criteria and satisfactory grant management. GAO does suggest

2.

that NEH attempt to improve proper accountability in grantees' administration of funds but indicates that it is significantly ahead of the Arts Endowment in this respect and well within appropriate norms.

For your further information, I am enclosing the complete text of the GAO letter.

I hope you know that I am very sensitive to your concerns and intend to be completely responsive to them. However, I would be less than honest if I did not emphasize my belief that NEH is an extremely well run agency and that both you and I have every reason to be proud of it.

With warm regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ron".

Ronald S. Berman
Chairman

Enclosure