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By DAVE REID

Special Bulletin Washington Bureau

Pell seeking to bring humanities to 'mom and pop' stores

WASHINGTON -- In 1963, Sen. Claiborne Pell presided at a marriage of convenience.

The couple -- the arts and the humanities -- took the high-flown married name of "cultural excellence," but in the eyes of Congress, it was a wedding of opposites.

Pell himself was interested in government support for the arts -- painting, ballet, theater and the like -- but in the United States of a decade ago, those were considered "long-haired, esoteric kinds of occupations," he recalled recently.

On the other hand, there were the old, dull humanities -- such as history, philosophy and archeology and their dry-tower kin. They were politically lifeless and had supporters in each of the states, who had been pressing the government for help.

To win support for the arts, Pell

forged, the alliance in the Arts and Humanities Act of 1963, with the humanities supplying the legislative muscle.

But the wedding has come back to bother Pell this year in ways that would have seemed almost impossible in 1963.

In the succeeding 10 years, the Bohemian, risqué arts have come into widespread American fashion.

The humanities -- whether they are just naturally not as flashy, or because, as Pell claims, they are under less-inspired administration -- are no longer the front-runners when it comes to justifying the expense of federal money, the senator said.

And that expense is no longer insubstantial.

In their first year, the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, the twin institutions established by the original act, spent only \$5 million.

Last year, they spent more than \$150 million. The humanities endowment, in fact, is reportedly the largest single source of money for humanistic studies in the world.

Amid this growth, Pell has been entangled with the humanities endowment -- and now its chairman, Dr. Ronald Bertram -- in a long-standing dispute.

It is based on an argument between

Pell and the humanists over the senator's demand that the endowment form state councils for the humanities -- paralleling similar councils required by law for the arts endowment. Pell also wants these councils tied to local political processes.

Only this way, he said, will money filter beyond the more prestigious arts and humanities institutions to the people who pay the tax freight. Also, he sees the arts and humanities as potential avocations for millions of newly leisured Americans.

It has been a largely unsuccessful struggle for the senator.

Just last month, Pell lost a crucial