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# Reauthorization: S. 2724 (1990): Correspondence 18

Lynne V. Cheney

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**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

AUG 05 1987

THE CHAIRMAN

August 5, 1987

The Honorable Sidney R. Yates  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Yates:

I read Jack Neusner's letter to you regarding his proposed curtailment of NEH's museum program (and, by analogy, the work of IMS) and, in all candor, I find it quite unpersuasive.

First, Mr. Neusner's letter greatly exaggerates the actual degree of duplication between NEA and NEH programs. It is true, as Mr. Hodsoll's letter points out, that a few of the fifty exhibitions from the years 1984-86 which were open to the public as of May 1987 also received funding from the Arts Endowment. But the actual overlap is only seven exhibitions, or 14 percent of the total -- a figure which does not suggest, to my mind, a large amount of duplication. Indeed, I have to point out that even in those few cases, we and NEA are funding very different components of the project at hand. Unlike the Arts Endowment, our concentration is always, as Mr. Hodsoll also points out, on the historical, philosophical, or social aspects of the exhibit. Mr. Neusner's plan, were it to be carried out, would seriously impede many art historical exhibitions, since the Arts Endowment rightly puts its priority (as Chairman Hodsoll explains) on support for living artists.

To turn to another issue raised by Mr. Neusner, like the NEA, the NEH also makes extensive use of matching funds. However, we do not think that it would be desirable or entirely fair to smaller institutions or those located in states with few private foundations to require matching funds for every grant. But while we do not make the use of these funds obligatory, we nonetheless encourage such attempts to draw upon the private sector; and we frequently offer combinations of outright funds and treasury matching funds. We think that this technique is a good one. In the long run it helps promote private contributions to humanities institutions while it enables institutions in the short term to build on their existing strengths.

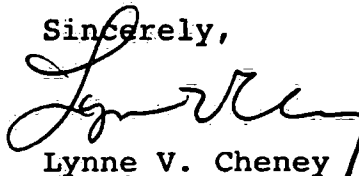
The Honorable Sidney R. Yates  
August 5, 1987  
Page 2

Let me also add that our "Museums" program is not exclusively for museums and surely not just for art museums. Its full title is "Museums and Historical Organizations," and we would not want to see any shift in programs between our agencies that might undermine the help we give to museums or organizations other than art museums.

I am forced to conclude that Professor Neusner has uncovered a non-problem. Moreover, his proposed "solution" would almost certainly antagonize the entire museum community and would, I'm afraid, create serious inequities if it were ever implemented.

Thank you for taking the time to look at all this, and thank you also for stating so candidly to Mr. Neusner that you were not prepared to agree with him without soliciting my views and those of Mrs. Shepherd and Mr. Hodsoll. I will also share this letter with Mr. Neusner, Mrs. Shepherd, Mr. Hodsoll, and Senator Pell.

Sincerely,



Lynne V. Cheney  
Chairperson

cc: Senator Claiborne Pell  
Francis S.M. Hodsoll  
Jacob Neusner  
Lois Burke Shepherd