

STATEMENT OF JOHN E. FOGARTY, REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE  
SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND, BEFORE  
THE JOINT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC WORKS  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1963

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committees. I wish at this time to enter in the record a strong plea for the approval of H.J. Res. 843 which provides for renaming the National Cultural Center as the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Memorial Center. This Joint Resolution has also been introduced by my distinguished colleague Representative Charles A. Buckley of New York and has been introduced in the Senate by the distinguished Senator from Arkansas, William Fulbright, on behalf of himself and numerous Senatorial colleagues. A more recent suggestion is to name the Center the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts--a name that would be even more fitting in terms of the purpose of the Center.

I can think of no more fitting or deserved tribute to our late President than naming this proposed Center for the Performing Arts in the Nation's capital in his honor. Certainly no President made more consistent and creative efforts to elevate the place of the arts and their practitioners than did President Kennedy. In the words of one well-known performing artist who had conferred with the late President on the role of the arts and the artist, "He made the performing artist feel 10 feet tall."

I urge the speedy adoption of this Joint Resolution for yet another reason. In renaming the National Cultural Center for our late President, we would do honor not only to his name and to his long series of thoughtful

and energetic actions in support of the arts, but we would at the same time do honor to his gracious and courageous widow who has so distinguished herself through her generous sharing of her own enthusiasm, knowledge, and cultivated taste in the arts.

It appears to me certain that the action I am proposing would have a most salutary effect upon the completion of plans to make this new Center a reality at the earliest possible time. The authorization to provide Federal funds to match funds made available from private sources is in keeping with the procedure which the Congress has followed in numerous other endeavors and will assure the success of the Center's building program, for which we have already waited too long. Our Nation cannot afford to be satisfied any longer with facilities for the arts in our capital which are unworthy of the position of eminence for which we are striving so notably in other fields of endeavor.

The Center itself will represent a focal point for excellence in the arts throughout the Nation. And it is to help raise the standard of excellence in the arts among all our people that I have introduced again in the present Congress my bill to establish a National Institute of the Arts and Humanities (H.R. 324). The purposes of this bill are entirely consonant with the aims of the Cultural Center which we propose naming in honor of our late President. Decisive action through

legislation to support the arts and their institutions would be a completely appropriate tribute to President Kennedy and to the high standards of artistic excellence for which he stood.

I urge upon each of you the early consideration of this Joint resolution as an initial step in tribute to a President who, more than any who preceded him, gave unstintingly of his personal attention and devotion toward enhancing the cultural life of the Nation.