

February 23, 1965

Statement of the Honorable John E. Fogarty
A Representative from the State of Rhode Island

Messrs. Chairmen and Members of the Special Subcommittee on the Arts and Special Subcommittee on Labor:

I am happy to take this opportunity to express once again before my colleagues in both Houses of the Congress my own strong convictions concerning the necessity for enactment of legislation which will give Federal stimulation, recognition, and support to the Arts and Humanities. It is particularly gratifying to me to see that proposed legislation on behalf of the Arts and Humanities is the subject of Joint Hearings, presided over by the distinguished Senator from my own State of Rhode Island, Senator Pell, and my distinguished colleague and Representative from New Jersey, Representative Thompson. Both of these gentlemen deserve the warm thanks of all of us who are deeply concerned with the welfare of the Arts and Humanities for their combined efforts to advance the cause of the legislation now before us.

It was my privilege on January 7th of this year to introduce two bills pertaining to the Arts and Humanities, H.R. 2042 and H.R. 2043. I wish at this time to re-emphasize my belief in the rightness of Federal involvement in furthering greater public understanding and enjoyment of, and participation in, the broad fields of the Arts and Humanities. In these realms, after all, are to be found not only the artistic creations and intellectual achievements of our past, but also the aesthetic and spiritual satisfactions which must remain a vital part of our future if our Nation is to achieve its full stature among the countries and cultures of the world.

I have every confidence that we shall be able to agree upon legislation which will provide for the separate as well as collective needs of the Arts and Humanities, and which, at the same time, will avoid duplication of Federal effort and activity authorized under existing or other proposed legislation. The spirit of cooperation, mutual understanding and respect which was apparent during the opening day's testimony before this joint body yesterday merely adds to my optimism in this regard. From the statements and testimony of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Mr. Roger Stevens; the U.S. Commissioner of Education, Mr. Francis Keppel; the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Dr. S. Dillon Ripley; and the Librarian of Congress, Mr. L. Quincy Mumford, it is quite evident to all that cooperative effort between a new Foundation for the Arts and Humanities and these functioning Federal agencies would be not only possible but indeed desirable. It seems apparent also that the concerns and responsibilities for the Arts and Humanities within these existing agencies could be met even more effectively if there were a Foundation to give visibility and support to these areas at the Federal level.

It is my belief that community, private, and State support for the Arts and Humanities would not be lessened by Federal recognition and support, as some have argued, but would, in fact, be increased. In my own State of Rhode Island, for example, relatively small sums of the State funds are spent on a variety of activities such as free concerts for public school students, free public concerts, free public operatic

performances, and grants to historical societies, historical and restorative projects, and symphonies and music festivals. I feel certain that these sums would be increased if there were available Federal matching funds and other support and services. The pattern would be repeated in each of the States. Some of the States, notably New York, have already proved the validity of this assumption through the additional local funds generated as the result of the expenditures of limited State funds by their respective State Arts organizations.

Some have said, in effect, that the United States is already doing well in supporting the Arts and Humanities without significant Federal aid, and that it is therefore not needed. I agree that the United States, on the basis of the large numbers of its citizens who are participating in some aspect of the Arts and Humanities - visiting museums and libraries, going to concerts or plays, participating in symphony orchestras or theatre groups, working in the graphic arts, and the like - appears to be doing extremely well. To this argument against any Federal legislation giving recognition and support to the Arts and Humanities, I would make answer on two counts. First, are we honestly satisfied with our present facilities, programs, and participation in these areas of human life, considering our growing population of nearly 190 million? And second, can we dare assume that we are doing all that we should to identify, educate, and provide incentives for the potential artists and scholars among all our people, through whose efforts and achievements alone the quality of our future National product in the Arts and Humanities can be raised to even higher levels?

I have noted with great satisfaction, as I am sure you have, the announcement by the President today of the members to form the National Council on the Arts. This is an historic first step in our Federal recognition of the importance of the Arts in our life as a Nation. But it is only a first step and will require thoughtful and imaginative legislative action by the Congress if the experienced counsel and recommendations of this distinguished group of artists, educators and administrators are to be brought to bear on the improvement of the Arts throughout the country.

In addition to giving needed recognition and support to the Arts and Humanities through legislation such as I have introduced, I believe we must provide authorization to existing Federal agencies for strengthening their programs in these areas which have heretofore been largely neglected. The U.S. Office of Education, for example, should be enabled to support teacher institutes in the Arts and those areas of the Humanities not presently provided for under the National Defense Education Act. The beneficial effect of such institutes upon improved teaching at all levels has been amply demonstrated in other subject fields. There is no justification whatever for excluding these important areas of the curriculum from Federal stimulation and support.

In the area of scholarships and fellowships, these should certainly be provided for in the several art areas and for the humanistic disciplines. How else can we be assured of attracting and retaining the most qualified teachers and artists in these subject areas?

Certainly assistance is needed for the States, colleges and universities in the procurement of necessary equipment for the improvement and extension of their programs in the Arts and Humanities. Here, too, the Office of Education should be enabled to provide support similar to that it now provides in other areas of the curriculum. Otherwise our Federal education program is fragmented and works to the disadvantage of those areas not eligible for Federal support.

In conclusion, I would say that these Joint Hearings appear to me to be especially timely in view of the President's stated intention to support a National Foundation of the Arts in his State of the Union address. The number of senators and representatives who have seen fit to sponsor bills in behalf of the Arts and Humanities in the present Session of Congress augurs well for the early passage of legislation which will permit the Federal government, at long last, to begin to assume a part of its responsibility for the improvement of the quality of American life by giving limited but effective support and encouragement to the Arts and Humanities.