

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

At the request of the Subcommittee Chairmen, I have today transmitted the Administration's recommendations for a National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities to the Special Subcommittee on Labor of the House of Representatives, and the Special Subcommittee on Arts and Humanities of the Senate.

In the State of the Union address I said "We must also recognize and encourage those who can be pathfinders for the nation's imagination and understanding."

These recommendations are designed to secure such recognition and encouragement for those who extend the frontiers of understanding in the arts and in humanistic studies.

The humanities are an effort to explore the nature of man's culture and to deepen understanding of the sources and goals of human activity. Our recommendations recognize this effort as a central part of the American national purpose, and provide modest support to those whose work offers promise of extending the boundaries of understanding.

Pursuit of artistic achievement, and making the fruits of that achievement available to all its people, is also among the hallmarks of a Great Society.

We fully recognize that no government can call artistic excellence into existence. It must flow from the quality of the society and the good fortune of the nation. Nor should any government seek to restrict the freedom of the artist to pursue his calling in his own way. Freedom is an essential condition for the artist, and in proportion as freedom is diminished so is the prospect of artistic achievement.

But government can seek to create conditions under which the arts can flourish; through recognition of achievements, through helping those who seek to enlarge creative understanding, through increasing the access of our people to the works of our artists, and through recognizing the arts as part of the pursuit of American greatness.

That is the goal of this legislation.

In so doing we follow the example of many other nations where government sympathy and support have helped to shape great and influential artistic traditions.

This Congress will consider many programs which will leave an enduring mark on American life. But it may well be that passage of this legislation, modest as it is, will help secure for this Congress a sure and honored place in the story of the advance of our civilization.

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