

BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE
METROPOLITAN SERVICE DISTRICT

FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUPPORTING) Resolution No. 90-1253
CONGRESSIONAL RENEWAL OF) Introduced by Rena Cusma,
THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR) Executive Officer and David
THE ARTS) Knowles, Councilor District 11

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Service District (Metro) is committed to improving the quality of life in the region it serves; and

WHEREAS, public art makes an integral contribution to the quality of life, civic pride, cross-cultural understanding and the free expression of the spirit of our communities; and

WHEREAS, Metro, through the Oregon Convention Center and the facilities of the Metro Exposition-Recreation Commission, is one of the region's major curators of public art; and

WHEREAS, grant money from the National Endowment for the Arts, coupled with the Metro One Percent for Arts program, has in large part made the acquisition of artwork for these public facilities possible; and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Convention Center has been recognized as a prime example of integrating the arts with the architecture and construction of a public building; and

WHEREAS, in the 24 year history of the National Endowment for the Arts, there have been 85,000 grants that have funded over 1,000,000 images and only 25 projects have become controversial; and

WHEREAS, the restrictive language approved by Congress in 1990 would impose an ambiguous and oppressive standard of self-censorship upon works produced or acquired to the detriment of expression and quality, and provoke retaliatory protest from within and without the arts community; and

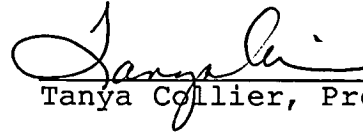
WHEREAS, the National Council on the Arts, its chairman, its citizen panel system and local matching requirements for grants provide appropriate checks and balances in regard to federal funding for the arts; and

WHEREAS, President Bush supports re-authorization of the NEA without restrictive language and has submitted legislation to that effect to Congress; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Metropolitan Service District supports the re-authorization of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965 and continued funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum Services for FY-1991 without any restrictive language.

ADOPTED by the Council of the Metropolitan Service District
this 10th day of May, 1990.



Tanya Collier, Presiding Officer



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ACTION ALERT

February 15, 1990

TO: Members of the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies

FROM: Bruce Rossley, Advocacy Chair
Robert L. Lynch, President & CEO

RE: Continuing Attack on the National Endowment for the Arts

THE LATEST ATTACK

"The National Endowment for the Arts Is at It Again!" So began yet another diatribe by Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) to the other members of Congress the week of February 5. Mr. Rohrabacher, who in 1989 stood before the House of Representatives and offered an amendment which would have struck all federal funding of the National Endowment for the Arts, has launched a weekly campaign highlighting those arts projects which he deems to have been inappropriately funded with public money. The first target of Mr. Rohrabacher's hit list is a performance by Annie Sprinkle staged in New York City at the Kitchen.

In his letter to Congress, Mr. Rohrabacher described Annie Sprinkle as the "star of 150 explicit, XXX-rated videos" and continued, "Okay, now, hold onto your hats . . . and your wallet. Annie Sprinkle's titillating masterpiece received your constituents' tax dollars in the following manner: The New York State Council on the Arts receives \$500,000 in unrestricted funds from the National Endowment for the Arts every year. In turn, the Council chose to spend \$25,000 on a performance series at the Kitchen Theatre in New York If the NEA can't hold itself responsible to the U.S. taxpayer, it's our job to make them responsible."

Despite all his inflammatory rhetoric, Mr. Rohrabacher, just like Senator Helms and others before him, doesn't always get his facts straight. In a statement issued by Arts Endowment Chairman John Frohnmayer on February 6, he said: In fiscal year 1989, the Kitchen received a seasonal support grant of \$60,000 from the Endowment. Their application did not request support for any activity involving Annie Sprinkle, nor was the Endowment asked to examine, review or approve an application for this performance. Furthermore, the New York State Council on the Arts has stated that neither Endowment state block grants nor its own funds went to support this presentation."

Rather than learning about the positive work funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, Mr. Rohrabacher seems to have spent the Congressional recess looking for potentially controversial grants. Rather than attending Endowment-supported performances and art exhibits to educate himself on the wealth of aesthetic experiences the Endowment presents, Mr. Rohrabacher has looked to be outraged and has deliberately sought out any art forms which could possibly do so. Instead of talking with individual artists whose funding from the Endowment has allowed them to express their unique visions in a greater capacity, Mr. Rohrabacher has singled out the few examples that can be made to seem outrageous or frivolous or obscene.

Let's face it, Mr. Rohrabacher is not interested in understanding the merit of the Endowment's funding decisions. Mr. Rohrabacher is not interested in the opportunities afforded such communities as Rutland, Vermont; Ketchikan, Alaska; Tifton, Georgia; Acadiana, Louisiana; Beaumont, Texas; and Enterprise, Oregon; and hundreds of other places across the United States that would not have been possible without Endowment funding. Mr. Rohrabacher is only interested in finding examples of the arts that he hopes will shock and offend the public into thinking that the Endowment is irresponsible with taxpayers' money. And, if we in the arts community do not respond to this attack in an ongoing organized manner, Mr. Rohrabacher will succeed in his mission.

Already forces sympathetic to Mr. Rohrabacher are joining in the attempts to censure the Endowment. On February 13 in the "Washington Times" newspaper, those members of the House of Representatives who helped defeat Mr. Rohrabacher's amendment (the Helms amendment in the Senate) to restrict Endowment funding practices were targeted in a one-page advertisement paid for by the American Family Association in Tupelo, Mississippi. Congressional supporters of the Endowment were labeled as allowing the Endowment to "continue . . . in the use and abuse of your tax dollars."

The case against the Endowment is growing in fervor. Artist bashing seems to make for great headlines. It is time again for Congress to hear a different viewpoint.

WHAT'S AT STAKE

The reason that the attacks are increasing right now is that two important pieces of federal legislation are pending:

1. The appropriations process begins again for the National Endowment for the Arts. Hearings will start in early spring and recommendations will be made in the House and Senate, first by the Subcommittees on the Interior, then by the full Appropriations Committees, then by the full House and the full Senate and, finally, in a conference committee of both branches before being signed into law in the fall. Each step will be hard won this year.
2. The reauthorization process, which authorizes the existence of the National Endowment for the Arts and sets out its mission, occurs every five years. 1990 is one of those years. Hearings will begin in March and recommendations will be made in the House and Senate, first by subcommittees, second by the full committees, third by the full House and Senate and, last, in a conference committee of both branches before being signed into law in the fall.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

It is imperative that a national campaign of letter writing and telephone calls begin immediately and continue over the next eight months to members of Congress. Local arts agencies will need to be leaders in their communities in organizing responses.

- o Urge your board of directors, staff, community leaders, religious leaders, school children, and the community at large to contact their Senate and House representatives in Washington and express their support of the National Endowment for the Arts.
- o Give them the ammunition they need to make persuasive cases. For instance, they should know the benefits to their community as a result of Endowment money, either through direct funding or through state arts agency regranting, or just as a symbol of public support for the arts.
- o Are they aware that many state colleges and universities receive Endowment funding for their arts programming? If your state schools receive such funding, pass this information on.
- o Educate them about the Endowment's panel process through which grants are awarded; make sure it is understood that panels are composed of their fellow citizens representing the diversity of culture and expression that comprises this country.

- o Encourage their endorsement of a creative process that is unfettered by bureaucracy. After all, it was the free rein of creativity which allowed this young country to become a world power within a brief span of history. And choices of what is appropriate for a community should be made by the community, not by Congress.

This episode is only the beginning in what promises to be an ever-increasing onslaught of criticism hurled at the Endowment by those who wish to either limit its authority or jeopardize its future. It is crucial for all members of the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies to organize their communities and respond immediately to this unwarranted assault. And, as the arts advocactes for your community, you must be prepared to conduct these campaigns on an ongoing basis; otherwise, the side working against the Endowment and against public support for the arts in general will be the predominant voice heard. We all know that Congress tends to respond to the groups having the tenacity to stay with an issue -- it was true with voting and civil rights issues, and it remains true now. Currently, Congress is hearing plenty from the other side. Numbers count.

Enclosed with this Action Alert is the list of House members the American Family Association identified as misguided supporters of the Endowment. They will be contacted by people who want to see funding for the Endowment end. They will have to hear from you, as well, if we want their continued support.

Over the next six months, NALAA will be conducting a series of informational and action alert mailings to keep our membership apprised of the situation. A tentative timeline for action is also enclosed. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the NALAA office.

ADVOCACY 1990

THE FEDERAL AGENDA

SUPPORT FEDERAL FUNDING OF THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES WITH NO RESTRICTIVE LANGUAGE

Reasons:

- o *Creativity.* Investment in the arts is an investment in a more creative America.
- o *Track record.* Despite the current allegations, the NEA can cite thousands of examples of wonderful projects it has funded in every corner of America.
- o *Panel Process.* Like the American jury system, the panel process using knowledgeable citizens is the best safeguard that money will be spent wisely. It is not perfect but it is the best process.

1. Support the Reauthorization of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965.

Background: Every five years, the need to continue the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and Institute of Museum Services is examined and voted on by Congress. This is the year.

2. Oppose the Addition of Any Restrictive Language to the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965 in the Reauthorization Bill.

Background: Currently the authorization language clearly outlines a process whereby panels and the National Councils on the Arts and Humanities make decisions about what gets funded based upon their professional artistic judgement. Like any such process, it will not always be perfect but this process is good, nonpolitical, and sufficient.

3. Support Increased Appropriations for the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum Services for Fiscal 1991.

Background: The motive behind much of the attack against the NEA is not philosophical but rather that some elected officials simply want the federal funding for the arts and humanities drastically reduced or eliminated.

- o This year the NEA budget is \$171.255 million. President Bush has recommended \$175 million for next year. \$238 million would be needed to fund the NEA in fiscal 1991 to equal the fiscal 1981 level of inflation.*
- o This year the NEH budget is \$156.910 million. President Bush has recommended \$165 million for next year. \$227 million would be needed to fund the NEH in fiscal 1991 to equal the fiscal 1981 level plus inflation.*

4. **Oppose the Insertion of Any Restrictive Language in the Appropriations Bills for the NEA, NEH, or IMS.**

Background: In last year's fiscal 1990 appropriations bill, language was inserted that would prohibit federal support for "materials which in the judgement of the National Endowment for the Arts or the National Endowment for the Humanities may be considered obscene, including but not limited to depictions of sadomasochism, homo-eroticism, the sexual exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts; and which when taken as a whole do not have serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."

Since the appropriations process is new each year, the language can be stricken and we can return to pre-1990 language.

*Rate of inflation according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Prepared by: American Arts Alliance
American Association of Museums
American Council for the Arts
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies
National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

ADVOCACY 1990

THE REASONS WHY

THE ARTS PROMOTE CREATIVITY

Investment in the arts is an investment in the creative future of the United States.

Technology turns to the arts for innovation and inspiration.

FEDERAL FUNDING IS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

Governmental leadership in supporting the arts stimulates giving from the private sector.

Federal funding helps set priorities for funding the arts throughout the country.

Federal support ensures the broad access to the arts for all citizens and the stability for arts institutions important to the national interest.

THE ARTS PROMOTE THE UNITED STATES AROUND THE WORLD

The international export of our arts builds pride and a sense of national identity for Americans throughout the world.

American culture contributes to a positive balance of trade through demand internationally.

THE ARTS STIMULATE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Arts programs spur downtown revitalization.

A rich cultural climate attracts business and industrial corporate relocation.

The arts are a powerful attraction in promoting tourism.

THE ARTS BENEFIT THE PUBLIC

Through experiencing the arts, individuals question and clarify their values.

The arts in their broadest expression allow individuals to make informed choices.

**THE ARTS DEFINE AND PRESERVE
A NATION'S CULTURE**

The arts help define a community's identity and develop in our citizens a sense of community.

The arts contribute to better communication across the mix of cultures in our country.

**THE ARTS ARE BASIC TO
A THOROUGH EDUCATION**

Learning in the arts develops nonverbal skills -- perception, imagination, and creation.

Arts education builds skills in cooperation and self-discipline.

Arts education develops skills in creative problem solving.

The arts provide opportunities to learn throughout life.

**SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL
IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE MESSAGE**

Facts and figures about how federal funding supports programs in your community make the best arguments with your legislators.

Prepared by: American Arts Alliance
American Association of Museums
American Council for the Arts
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies
National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

POSITION PAPER - NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Background

Considerable Congressional and public attention has been focused on the National Endowment for the Arts over the last year. During debate of the Endowment's FY 90 appropriation, an amendment adopted by the Senate barring federal funding of "obscene or indecent" artwork touched off a firestorm of controversy across the country that threatened the existence of the Endowment.

The amendment was prompted by two Endowment grants that helped fund exhibitions of photographs some found offensive or sacrilegious. In conference, the amendment was modified to grant broad discretion to the Endowment to bar funding only for work that - in the opinion of the Endowment - "may be considered" obscene and without "serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value."

The Endowment expects this debate to continue into 1990. Furthermore, the Endowment is now preparing to go through its next reauthorization as the Agency's authorizing legislation expires at the end of FY 90.

Discussion

The Endowment must reaffirm public commitment for federal support of the arts and restate its proper role as the primary federal agency seeking to enhance the lives of all Americans through knowledge of the arts, exposure to them and development of the most profound thought and expression of which Americans are capable.

The Endowment has developed a consistent message which addresses its commitment to support the arts, while it recognizes the conflict that will occasionally occur between creativity and matters of personal taste. The Endowment's relationship with Congress, the arts community and the American people can be addressed through the following themes:

1. Creativity. Creativity is fundamental to the American character and has, throughout our history, been critical to our success as a nation. The arts teach creativity: a poet making sense out of chaos with a few inspired stanzas; a visual artist expressing what others see but cannot organize; an architect confronting us with new forms; a folk artist making the most commonplace utensil beautiful or fanciful. As we move into a new decade and toward a new

The peer panel system has served the Endowment and the arts community well over the past 24 years, and should be continued. However, the Endowment is examining ways to strengthen and improve the process. We are developing additional procedures which will assure:

- a) Broad geographical representation.
- b) Broad ethnic/cultural representation.
- c) A wide spectrum of artistic viewpoints.
- d) Fairness in fact and perception in all panel actions.
- e) Adequate records of deliberations to justify each grant.

In addition, some of these issues and others will be reviewed by the Independent Commission established by Congress to study the Endowments grantmaking process.

Attempting to justify peer panel decisions on an image-by-image or word-by-word basis is an impossible task. This country is so diverse and its view points so personal, that all people will never be satisfied by all artwork. Because art is a creative endeavor and because it is the Endowment's role to support the broad array of arts produced in our nation, we could not nor would we want to guarantee that all art funded would please all people. It is, therefore, simply not possible for us to create a system that eliminates controversy in the funding of works of art. Quite to the contrary, for centuries controversy has been part and parcel of the creative process that produces art.

The Endowment will continue to predicate its grantmaking decisions based on the recommendations of its peer panels and National Council on the Arts. Whatever "controversy" arises from their recommendations will involve only a miniscule portion of our grants, and any remedy designed to reach the occasional case would cause far more problems than it could ever solve.

Conclusion

For the Endowment to continue to function as Congress intended -- to "sustain...a climate encouraging freedom of thought, imagination and inquiry" -- we must recognize that controversy will, from time to time, arise in connection with the work we support. The Endowment can make its grantsmaking process more accountable but we cannot eliminate the possibility of discord.

century, creativity will be our currency and can make us more competitive as a nation.

2. Endowment Success. What has been lost in this debate is the phenomenal success of the National Endowment for the Arts over the past 25 years. Its programs and activities have promoted creativity and excellence in the arts in all reaches of our society. For example, we have:

- a) Helped establish arts councils in all 50 states and 6 territories (only about 5 states had them in 1964).
- b) Helped establish local arts councils in more than 250 cities and regions.
- c) Assisted multi-cultural groups such as the Dance Theater of Harlem, the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, El Teatro Campesino, and the Institute of Alaska Native Arts.
- d) Promoted folk arts programs for the preservation of our heritage in all areas of the country.
- e) Served rural America through touring, art mobiles, satellite museums and other innovative programs.
- f) Supported arts education to combat the cultural illiteracy that exists in our country.
- g) Encouraged development of new works in dance, music, visual arts, literature, architecture, etc.
- h) Stimulated local economies. Many areas of the United States are tourist destinations for the world. Our cultural institutions and our artistic life are an increasingly important part of attracting those dollars.

3. Public Participation in the Endowment's Grantmaking Activities. The Endowment, in all of its actions, is guided by its responsibility to use taxpayers dollars to promote the public interest through its programs and activities. Recognizing our obligation to dispense public funds in an equitable and accountable manner, for the past twenty-five years the Endowment's grantmaking activities have been guided by a system of peer panel review. All grant applications are reviewed and funding decisions are made by panels of highly respected citizens from across the country. About 100 panels meet each year involving nearly 700 individuals. This system of peer panel review lies at the heart of the Endowment's grantmaking process and provides for a fair decision making process. In all instances, these decisions are reaffirmed by communities on the local level, as almost all Endowment grants require a local funding match.

CONVENTION & VISITOR FACILITIES
COMMITTEE REPORT

RESOLUTION NO. 90-1253, FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUPPORTING
CONGRESSIONAL RENEWAL OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
ARTS

Date: April 25, 1990 Presented by: Councilor David Knowles

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Convention and Visitor Facilities Committee voted 4 to 0 to recommend Council adoption of Resolution No. 90-1253. Voting: Councilors Knowles, Buchanan, McFarland and Van Bergen. Absent: Councilor Hansen. This action was taken on April 24, 1990.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION/ISSUES: Neil McFarlane presented the staff report. He pointed out that Metro has been a direct beneficiary of National Endowment for the Arts programs. The Convention Center public art program has benefitted from two grants totaling \$95,000. The National Endowment for the Arts also supports local cultural and performing arts groups, many of which perform at the Metro ERC managed Portland Center for the Performing Arts.

Every five years the need to continue the National Endowment for the Arts is examined and voted on by Congress. In 1990 Congress will consider reauthorization of the National Endowment for the Arts as the authorizing legislation expires at the end of FY 1990.

The Convention and Visitor Facilities Committee asked who brought this matter to the attention of the Committee. Staff indicated that it was the Metropolitan Arts Commission.

The Committee asked what would be done with the Resolution supporting renewal of the National Endowment of the Arts if the resolution were adopted by Council. Staff said it would be given to the Oregon congressional delegation.

The Committee noted that Metro has benefitted from National Endowment for the Arts grant money and indicated that the use of a resolution was a good method to indicate support for the renewal of the National Endowment for the Arts.

There were no further questions, comments or issues and the Committee voted unanimously to recommend Council adoption of Resolution No. 90-1253.

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STAFF REPORT

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 90-1253 FOR THE PURPOSE
OF SUPPORTING CONGRESSIONAL RENEWAL OF THE NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

DATE: April 18, 1990

PRESENTED BY: Don Rocks

Background

Attached please find materials provided to Metro by the Metropolitan Arts Commission concerning this issue.

Metro has in the past been a direct beneficiary of National Endowment for the Arts programs. The Convention Center public art program has benefited from two grants totaling \$95,000 - stretching our 1% for Art funds and allowing integration of the art program into the building's design phase.

The National Endowment for the Arts also supports local cultural and performing arts groups, many of which perform at the Metro ERC managed Portland Center for the Performing Arts. The financial health of these groups has a direct bearing on the ability of the PCPA to offer a program of events desirable to the region.

Executive Officer's Recommendation

The Executive Officer recommends that the Council adopt Resolution No. 90-1253 supporting congressional renewal of the national endowment for the arts.