



New York University

25 Waverly Place, 5th Floor
New York, N.Y. 10003
Telephone: (212) 598-3277 (for messages)
(212) 598-3053

Alfred de Grazia
Professor of Social Theory

December 9, 1977

Congressman John Brademas
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Select Education
2178 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20515

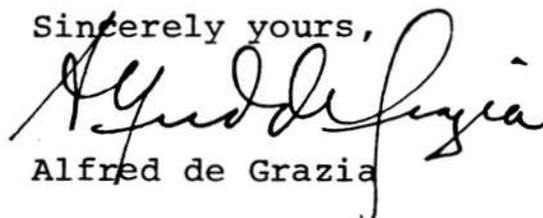
Dear Congressman Brademas:

House Joint Resolution 600, which would convoke a White House Conference on the Arts, is a proposition that I should like to support. No doubt your agenda of hearings on the Resolution will be crowded, for there is much public interest about the subject.

I thought therefore to prepare a comment for inclusion in the proceedings, should it be deemed useful.

Please let me know what else I might contribute to your efforts; I have given the question of public policy in the arts some study over the past two years.

Sincerely yours,



Alfred de Grazia

Enclosure

Statement of Dr. Alfred de Grazia

Research Professor of Social Theory, New York University
Respecting H. J. Res. 600

95th Congress, 1st Session

In only rare cases has a large, innovative program of the American federal government been launched with almost immediate success and with general approval. The program for support of the arts is such a rare experience, one that is all the more striking because of the multiplicity and complexity of all those activities that are called art. No doubt many reasons, some having to do with leadership and others with cooperative organization at many points, have contributed to the present vigor of Federal activity in the Arts. But probably the outstanding reason is that the American public was prepared for a significant advance in its cultural history.

The main questions, now, to which the present bill addresses itself, are how to consolidate the cultural advance, how to reinforce it, and how to move farther towards that national ideal which hardly anybody would dispute: an American people who every day breathe art as of good air, partake of art as of their daily food, and comfort themselves with art as they would with the security of their homes and the strength of their defenses. The proposed National Conference Planning Council would not, of course, achieve these goals in itself during its year of life, but must hold itself accountable for a plan

that will structure and orchestrate the complex movement of the years to come.

In the beginning, then, is the question of where the arts movement stands. Here the Planning Council must provide the White House Conference with facts that are presently unavailable. What part, indeed, do the arts play in the everyday American experience, calling to mind not only the tickets sold in the symphony halls and the new productions of public service television, but also the state of holiday ornamentation in the Bronx, of whittling in Bangor, of costuming in Corpus Christi, and of childrens' musical games in Seattle. The firmest basis of a national policy is a knowledge of the state of the arts among all Americans everywhere. A survey, a sample census, is indicated. It will tell who is doing what arts, with what means, and, most importantly, with what aim and aspirations, in every corner of the country. Only then can the flow of funds and energies in support of the arts be directed intelligently.

But, just as the country has its leaders in Congress, the arts have their leaders, for whom a survey is a beginning, not the end of policy. The proposed legislation directs the Planning Council and the Conference itself to go out to the country--to organize themselves to find the habits, opinions, and needs of the arts leadership. Their success can be tested in a way by whether their efforts end up in the so-called "society sections" of the newspapers or finish in a "free-for-all" among the editors of the arts section, business section, recreation section,

labor section, neighborhood section, with victory going to the general news section. That is, the words of the bill before the Committee here, that the Planning Council shall pay for the related expenses of States art agencies "Provided, That broad public participation is assured,"--these words must be taken seriously. I suggest that the States art agencies therefore reexamine their procedures of representing the artistic forces of their States, and in the present instance, at least, employ wise and also scientific counsel to organize the artistic voices of their jurisdictions.

Assuming that all goes well, and that correct and full inputs of informational needs and desires will have been moving through the channels of the policy-forming system, it would be well to impose an additional task upon it, the transporting of attitudes of responsibility and accountability. There is a practically fatal urge, in a mechanism such as the White House Conference and its supporting Council, for the participants to join in a chorus of desires and, when finished, to present to the Congress and taxpayers an extravagant invoice. The Conference and the Council can be of greatest help to the lawmakers and people if they see to it that the questions they ask and the channels they set up are interrupted at every point by considerations of costs and the means of support. Unless the Conference and Council are adamant about this matter, they will irresponsibly and

unjustly place upon the Congress and Presidency a fantastic burden of wishes without the means of their fulfillment.

This is not to say that the arts should not have more money or more support. Such issues are in the guts of the idea of the White House Conference. They are issues to be dealt with only when the present bill is passed, and not here. What is said here is that the public processes set into motion by this proposed legislation should proceed in full awareness of the immense and critical nature of the society's fiscal problems. And that the voices of the arts forces of the country should exercise some of their famed imagination upon means of advancing and supporting art that tend to stabilize and even advance the economy of the nation through art.

¶ The arts, that is, have a social and political responsibility and ought (perhaps even more than businessmen, officials, unions, schoolteachers, and military men) to be able to do something about it and to even set an example to these other groups. Again, this is not the proper time to offer proposals, but rather to determine how to structure them. Still, for example, it may be considered in the country-wide discussions engendered by this bill, whether broad advances in the artistic activities of the American people may be quite consonant with and even contribute to the conservation of billions of dollars of energy and resources. The voices of the arts should be the first to assert the humble yet great slogan of American success in every sphere of decision--"There must be something in it for everybody."

= END =

1 (2) that concern for the quality of life in the United
2 States requires constant dedication, planning, and reflec-
3 tion on the state of the arts in the Nation;

4 (3) that the arts have an increasingly significant
5 impact on the economic sector of our society;

6 (4) that it is appropriate to encourage maximum
7 participation by artists, knowledgeable citizens, State and
8 local government arts representatives, representatives of
9 labor, industry, and business, arts educators, and experts
10 in all fields of the arts in the process of insuring needed
11 support for the arts among all parties concerned at
12 Federal, State, and local levels; and

13 (5) that in order to implement these findings, it
14 is desirable to call a White House Conference on the
15 Arts.

16 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON THE ARTS

17 SEC. 3. (a) The President shall call a White House
18 Conference on the Arts to be held no later than December
19 31, 1979. The purpose of the Conference shall be to help
20 develop a climate in which the arts can flourish, and rec-
21 ommendations to formulate an assessment of problems and
22 issues relating to the arts, and to develop recommendations
23 relating to the appropriate growth of the arts in all parts of
24 the Nation.

25 (b) The Conference shall be planned and conducted

1 under the direction of a Presidentially appointed National
2 Conference Planning Council on the Arts headed by a
3 Chairman (appointed by the President) from among the
4 members of the Council. Each department and agency of
5 the Federal Government shall provide such cooperation and
6 assistance to the Council, including the assignment of per-
7 sonnel; as may reasonably be required by the Council.

8 NATIONAL CONFERENCE PLANNING COUNCIL ON
9 THE ARTS

10 SEC. 4. (a) There is hereby established a National
11 Conference Planning Council on the Arts. The Council
12 shall be composed of fifteen members appointed by the Presi-
13 dent. The Council shall provide guidance and planning
14 for the Conference.

15 (b) (1) Any member of the Council who is otherwise
16 employed by the Federal Government shall serve without
17 compensation in addition to compensation received in his
18 regular employment.

19 (2) Members of the Council, other than any member
20 referred to in paragraph (1), shall receive pay at rates
21 not to exceed the daily rate in effect for GS-18 in section
22 5332 of title 5, United States Code, for each day they are
23 engaged in the performance of their duties (including time
24 engaged in travel). While so serving away from their homes
25 or regular places of business, such members shall be allowed

1 travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence,
2 in the same manner as authorized in section 5703 of title 5,
3 United States Code, for persons in Government service
4 employed intermittently.

5 (c) The Council shall cease to exist one hundred and
6 eighty days, unless extended by the President, but in no
7 event a period not to exceed one year, after the submission
8 of the report required in section 5.

9 REPORT

10 SEC. 5. A report of the Conference shall be submitted
11 by the Council to the President and to the Congress no later
12 than one hundred and eighty days following the date on
13 which the Conference is called and shall include recommenda-
14 tions for any legislative action necessary to implement the
15 recommendations in the required report. The report shall
16 immediately be made available to the public.

17 ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

18 SEC. 6. In carrying out the provisions of this joint
19 resolution, the Council and the Chairman shall—

20 (1) request the cooperation and assistance of such
21 other Federal departments and agencies as may be
22 appropriate, including Federal advisory bodies having
23 responsibilities in areas affecting the arts;

24 (2) render all reasonable assistance, including
25 financial assistance, to the States in enabling them to

1 organize and conduce conferences on the arts before the
2 Conference;

3 (3) prepare and make available necessary back-
4 ground materials for the use of delegates to the
5 Conference;

6 (4) prepare and distribute such interim reports of
7 the Conference as may be appropriate; and

8 (5) appoint such individuals as may be necessary
9 without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States
10 Code, governing appointments in the competitive civil
11 service, and without regard to chapter 51 and sub-
12 chapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classi-
13 fication and General Schedule pay rates, but at rates
14 of pay not to exceed the rate prescribed for GS-18 in
15 section 5332 of such title.

16 GRANTS

17 SEC. 7. (a) From any sums appropriated under section
18 8, the Chairman with the approval of the Council, may make
19 a grant to each State, upon application by the State arts
20 agency of the State, in order to assist in defraying the costs
21 of the State in participating in the Conference program,
22 including the conduct of at least one conference within the
23 State: *Provided*, That broad public participation is assured
24 by such State arts agency.

AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 8. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this joint resolution.

DEFINITIONS

SEC. 9. For purposes of this joint resolution—

(1) the term “Chairman” means the Chairman of the National Conference Planning Council on the Arts;

(2) the term “Conference” means the White House Conference on the Arts;

(3) the term “Council” means the National Conference Planning Council on the Arts;

(4) the term “State” means the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and any other territory or possession of the United States; and

(5) the term “arts” includes, but is not limited to, music (instrumental and vocal), dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture and allied fields, painting, sculpture, photography, graphic and craft arts, industrial design, costume and fashion design, motion pictures, television, radio, tape and sound recording, and the arts related to the presentation, performance, execution, and exhibition of such major art forms.

95TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. J. RES. 600

JOINT RESOLUTION

To authorize the President to call a White
House Conference on the Arts.

By Mr. BRADMAS, Mr. THOMPSON, Mr. JEFFORDS,
Mr. PERKINS, and Mr. QUIE

SEPTEMBER 26, 1977

Referred to the Committee on Education and Labor