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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
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August 16, 1990

Law and Legislative Committee
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members in Session

SUBJECT: Resolution supporting the National Endowment for
the Arts Reauthorization

SUMMARY

This report presents a recommendation by the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission that the Law and Legislation Committee support adoption of a City Council resolution supporting the National Endowment for the Arts, particularly in the areas of Congressional funding and artistic freedom.

BACKGROUND

The need to continue the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum Services is examined and voted on every five years by Congress. The authorization language outlines a process whereby panels and the National Council on the Arts and Humanities make decisions about what gets funded based upon their professional artistic judgement. This process is respected by industry professionals, it is non-political, and it is sufficient.

In Fiscal Year 1990's appropriations bill, language was inserted that would prohibit federal support for "obscene or indecent materials, including the depiction of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, individuals in sex acts, denigration of religious beliefs, or the debasement of individuals based on race, creed, sex, handicap, age or national origin."

RESOLUTION NO.

ADOPTED BY THE SACRAMENTO CITY COUNCIL

ON DATE OF _____

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ADEQUATE FUNDING AND ARTISTIC FREEDOM FOR THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT OF THE ARTS

WHEREAS, the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission has benefitted from funding from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) and has generated one million dollars of new public sector funds as a result of a NEA grant awarded in 1987; and

WHEREAS, it is an American tradition to defend diversity of artistic expression that enhances our quality of life by helping to define national and community identity, values and heritage, contributing to cross-cultural communication and developing creative problem solving skills; and

WHEREAS, public investment in the arts stimulates economic growth, attracts business and corporate investment to communities, promotes downtown and neighborhood revitalization, spurs tourism, enhances the image of our communities and nation, and encourages innovation and inspiration in society; and

WHEREAS, the restrictive language approved by Congress in 1990 would have the effect of promoting censorship and inhibiting creativity at the expense of quality within the arts community, and gives Congress the power to micro-manage the endowment and define obscenity rather than the courts; and

WHEREAS, the endowment's citizen involved panel system, local matching requirements for grants and reviews by the presidentially-appointed National Council on the Arts and its Chairman provide appropriate checks and balances in regard to federal funding for the arts; and

WHEREAS, President Bush supports reauthorization of the NEA without restrictive language and has submitted legislation to that effect in Congress;

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RESOLUTION NO.: _____

DATE ADOPTED: _____

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Sacramento that they support the reauthorization of the National Endowment of the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum Service for FY-1991 without restrictive language.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

NEA-RES2

FOR CITY CLERK USE ONLY

RESOLUTION NO.: _____

DATE ADOPTED: _____

The Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission believes that this legislation will have a chilling effect on artistic freedom, and is not necessary, since obscenity laws apply equally to public and private sectors. Artists are traditionally on the cutting edge of cultural change. Throughout history their art has evoked the full range of emotions, including moral outrage. Many of the past's most controversial works are now appreciated and loved by society. Moreover it is in the American tradition to defend diversity of expression.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission and several other Sacramento artists and arts institutions have benefited from NEA funding. The Arts Commission, in particular, has generated over one million dollars of new public sector funds for the arts as a result of an NEA grant awarded in 1987. On July 11, 1990 the Sacramento Arts Commission adopted a motion expressing support for the NEA Reauthorization.

FINANCIAL DATA

None

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

None

MBE/WBE EFFORTS

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Law and Legislative Committee approve this report and forward to the full council for the adoption of the attached resolution in support of adequate funding and artistic freedom for the National Endowment for the Arts.

Respectfully submitted



ROBERT P. THOMAS
Director, Parks & Community
Services

Contact Person to
Answer Questions

Law and Legislation Committee
August 16, 1990
All Districts

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