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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 13, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

File

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The Administration today sent a bill to the Congress that will appropriate Federal funds for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting over a five-year period, starting with \$70 million in fiscal 1976 and reaching \$100 million by 1980. To assure that Federal support does not dominate public broadcasting and to encourage continued non-Federal contributions, the Federal funds would be provided on a matching basis -- with one Federal dollar for every \$2.50 in non-Federal revenues up to the annual ceiling.

Since enactment of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, the Federal Government has supported the growth and development of non-commercial educational radio and television through annual appropriations. During this time, public broadcasting has developed and matured into a far-reaching, effective medium for bringing high quality educational and cultural programming to millions of Americans.

A recurring question in public broadcasting has been how to reconcile Government funding with the possibility of Government control. On the one hand, if Federal funds are used to support public broadcasting, the Government must be able to evaluate how the funds are spent. To do otherwise would be irresponsible. On the other hand, strict accountability by public broadcasting to the Government can lead to Government direction of programming, which is contrary to the principles of free expression on which our Nation was founded. It is this issue alone which requires that the Congress consider a five-year appropriation for public broadcasting.

This bill is a constructive approach to the sensitive relationship between Federal funding and freedom of expression. It would eliminate the scrutiny of programming that could be associated with the normal budgetary and appropriations processes of the Government. At the same time, it would still permit periodic review of public broadcasting by the Congress. I believe that it will assure the independence of non-commercial radio and television programming for our Nation; and, long-term Federal funding will add stability to the financing of public broadcasting which may enhance the quality of its programming. I urge the Congress to enact it promptly.



H.R. 6461 -- CPB LONG-RANGE FUNDING BILL

The bill provides for a five year authorization and appropriation for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. This concept is in keeping with the Congressional intent behind the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 to remove public broadcasting from the annual budgetary and appropriations processes of the Federal Government. The reason behind this was to insulate public broadcasting programming decisions from the possibility of government influence or control.

The bill has the following essential features:

- ° Over the five year period from 40 to 50% of CPB's appropriation must be passed on directly to local public TV and radio stations, thus assuring that the "localism" principle is more firmly established.
- ° CPB must consult with local stations on the distribution of the funds. This provision further enhances and insures local station autonomy.
- ° Appropriation of funds is on a matching basis (one Federal dollar to every two and one half non-Federal dollars). This not only provides incentive for public broadcasting to raise non-Federal funds, but puts the Federal commitment in some kind of perspective.
- ° The matching formula appropriation is not open-ended; the bill establishes maximum limits on the Federal contribution for each year. The Administration believes that its proposed ceilings (\$70 to \$100 million) are more prudent than those proposed by CPB (\$88 to \$160 million), especially since this is the first venture into multi-year funding for public broadcasting.
- ° Although it provides for a five year appropriation, the bill does not relinquish annual Congressional oversight prerogatives.

As the President emphasized in his statement of February 13, the sole reason justifying a multi-year appropriation is the sensitive relationship between broadcast programming and Federal funding. In this regard, public broadcasting is sui generis -- it is the only Federally-funded mass communications medium. This proposal will therefore not open the floodgates of multi-year funding for other programs.

PUBLIC BROADCASTING FINANCING ACT OF 1975S.893:

Sponsors: Senators Magnuson (D-Wash), Griffin (R-Mich),
Pastore (D-R.I.), Pearson (R-Kan).

H.R.6461:

Sponsors: Representatives Macdonald (D-Mass), Murphy (D-N.Y.),
Carney (D-Ohio), Byron (D-MD), Wirth (D-
Colo), Brodhead (D-Mich), Frey (R-Fla),
Madigan (R-Ill).

Purpose:

To provide insulated, five-year financing for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and local public television and radio stations, as sought by every Administration and Congress since 1967.

Major Features:

- O.K.* 1. Five-year authorization and appropriation, FY '76 - FY '80.
- O.K.* 2. Annual appropriation amounts pegged to match of \$1 federal for each \$2.50 non-federal funds raised by local public broadcasters (H.R.6461 has \$1 - \$3 match in FY '79 and FY '80).
- O.K.* 3. Federal dollar ceilings each year: FY '76--~~\$88~~ million; FY '77--\$103 million; FY '78--\$121 million; FY '79--\$140 million; FY '80--~~\$160~~ million.
B100M
4. Broad oversight responsibility to Congress.
5. 40 percent rising to 50 percent of funds to go to local public broadcasting stations for their own use.

Status:

House: Communications Subcommittee had six days of hearings in March and April, reported H.R.6461 unanimously on April 28. Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee unanimously reported bill on May 13. Bill has now been referred to House Labor-HEW Appropriations Subcommittee, with hearings expected right after Congressional recess, June 26 - July 8.



Senate: Commerce Committee reported S.893 unanimously March 19. Senate Appropriations Labor-HEW Subcommittee held hearing April 23.

Administration: Bill was submitted by Administration with strong statement of support by President Ford for principle of insulated five-year funding, although Administration-proposed dollar ceilings were lower than those reported by Senate and House Committees in S.893 and H.R.6461.

Principle Arguments:

1. Five-year funding is necessary to keep public broadcasting programming adequately insulated from all pressures, particularly political pressures. It is also necessary for adequate research and planning.
2. Actual support levels will be established locally by the public because no federal dollars will be appropriated until matched by \$2.50 of non-federal dollars.
3. Funding at annual dollar ceilings is necessary to meet the demand for more and better public broadcasting program services.

Labn, N.E.W. - hearing

July 9, 1975

*See Michel, etc..
Makon*

