

DECEMBER 20, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

NOTICE TO THE PRESS

The President has signed S.1800--Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act-- which authorizes Federal indemnities for certain exhibitions of artistic and humanistic endeavors.

The bill authorizes a new Federal program to indemnify against loss or damage of certain exhibits of art and other artifacts or objects (including, among other things, paintings, sculpture, tapestries, manuscripts, rare books, other published matter, photographs, movies, and audio and video tape).

S. 1800 provides that the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities (which, under current law, is essentially an advisory body to the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities) shall be an agency for the purpose of the Act. The Council may indemnify exhibitions of objects described above which are of educational, cultural, historical or scientific value and which are certified by the Secretary of State or his designee as being in the national interest. Indemnified items would be covered while on exhibit within the United States, or elsewhere in the case of an exchange of exhibits. The bill would prohibit the Council from indemnifying both exhibits involved in an exchange, however, thus ensuring reciprocal treatment from foreign countries. Any person, nonprofit agency, institution or government would be eligible to apply for an indemnity agreement.

The bill limits the aggregate amount of such agreements that may be outstanding at any one time to \$250 million and further limits the amount of an indemnity for any single exhibition to \$50 million. Coverage for each exhibit indemnified under the bill also would apply only to damage or loss in excess of \$15,000.

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