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THE WHITE HOUSE

## STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The National Endowment for the Humanities, which I have strongly supported, faces important challenges in the future: It must help meet the demand by our citizens for fuller participation in the humanities and must infuse into the national life greater concern for ethical and moral values. To accomplish this goal the Federal and non-Federal sectors must cooperate to improve the financial stability of those American institutions which house and make available humanistic knowledge -- institutions of research, education, and dissemination.

It is a national paradox that at the same time public recognition and use of the humanities -- history, literature, archaeology, ethics -- is increasing the nation's cultural institutions -- libraries, museums, historical societies, colleges and universities, public radio and television -- are finding it increasingly difficult to keep their doors open and their programs alive. This has been a matter of deep concern to me for some time.

In the Arts, Humanities and Cultural Affairs Act of 1976, the Congress recognized the Federal responsibility and provided authorization for a Challenge Grant Program, to encourage a broader base of private support to such institutions. The private sector must assume the major responsibility for sustaining these institutions; but it is the Federal role to exercise leadership, to point the way. That is what a "challenge grant" mechanism enables us to do.

In my budget just submitted to the Congress, I specifically requested that this Challenge Grant Program be implemented this year, with a supplemental appropriation of \$12 million for the Humanities Endowment in fiscal 1977, and \$18 million to be appropriated in fiscal 1978. When matched three for one by private citizens, foundations, corporations, states, municipalities, labor, and civic groups, the \$12 million will provide \$48 million this year, and the \$18 million an additional \$72 million next year, for the cultural institutions of the nation and the citizens they serve.

The regular grant-making activities of the Humanities Endowment for specific projects will, of course, continue. However, it is important to note that separate Challenge Grant monies are designed to provide institutions with basic operating support: defraying deficits, renovation of facilities, maintenance, acquisition of equipment and materials, maintenance and conservation of collections, and design and development of fund-raising efforts, among other expenses.

I can think of no better cause for Federal involvement. I wish the National Endowment for the Humanities success in this undertaking.

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