CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

June 27, 2001

that that quality health care is equally accessible to all of our citizens and residents in this Nation.

Mrs. CAPPS. I want to make sure, just as we draw this to a close, I have a pledge I want to make with my two colleagues, but I want to make sure that we leave on the record the answers to a couple of myths that are out there. One is on the part of employers that where there is this fear that if we do this Patients’ Bill of Rights that the employer who provides the insurance will be liable, that the lawsuit will include them. We have been assured that they are in the business of providing insurance plans for their employees, who are also occasionally patients. Then if their employees choose that plan and they give them often that range of plans to choose from that, then they are not able to be touched by account- ability. That is clearly out of focus for this Nation.

The insurance company is the one who must be held accountable, not the employer in that case.

The other myth is that out there is, and I have heard it on the floor, I have heard it among some of our colleagues who say it is just going to drive up the cost of health care insurance, and there are so many particularly small busi- nesses who are struggling now to provide it, they want to provide it but that is another topic that we are going to address another time about making health care available in a variety of ways, not just putting it on the backs of mostly small business providers.

The cost of the premiums in Texas, in the plan that this Patients’ Bill of Rights, this Dingell-Ganske plan is based on, that the premiums went up, I think they characterized it as a Big Mac. I actually just a very small amount of an increase in a premium that most constituents, most employees, would be happy to make if they knew that they had the benefits that we have been outlining as part of this Dingell-Ganske Patient Protection Act.

So we want to make sure that it is clear that we do in this country hold people accountable when they make mistakes. Doctors, health care pro- viders, all employers, all companies, because we knew that we could make a mistake and we wanted our patients to have recourse, and health care pro- viders are very knowledgeable about the need to have that.

On the other hand, HMOs, and insurance companies like HMOs, are the only sector of our economy now that is not able to be touched by account- ability. That is clearly out of focus for our country’s pattern of holding ac- countability. This bill will correct that. It only holds those insurance companies liable when they practice medicine. If one practices medicine, they are held liable. If an insurance company chooses to practice medicine, they will be held liable as well. That is what this is all about.

With the Patients’ Bill of Rights, access to emergency care, access to obgyn without having to go through a gateway, these are not debatable. These are understood as needed re- forms within managed care today, and we need to embrace all of it as a pack- age, which is really about common sense.

Mrs. McCARTHY of New York. I would just like to follow up. When the gentlewoman was talking about our small businesses, I was on that committee for 4 years and we certainly all know how we have all fought to protect our small businesses. That is the en- gine that is driving this country, by the way. Our small businesses are doing it, our small businesses, like HMOs, are the gentlewoman was talking about our small businesses, I was on that committee for 4 years and we certainly all know how we have all fought to protect our small businesses. That is the engine that is driving this country, by the way. Our small businesses are doing it, our small businesses, like HMOs, are the way. Our small businesses are doing it, our small businesses, like HMOs, are the way. Our small businesses are doing it, our small businesses, like HMOs, are the.

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The protection that is in the Patients’ Bill of Rights, especially with the gen- tleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD), if anybody knows the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD), believe me he is going to protect small businesses. So that is a myth.

Unfortunately, there is too much pol- itical deals dealt with this health care issue and we should take the politics out of this issue and certainly do the right thing for the American people. That is what has to be done.

Mrs. CAPPS. I so appreciate my col- leagues being here. I think we are al- most out of time, but I will yield fur- ther to the gentlewoman from the Vir- gin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) for some comments.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I am glad that the gentlewoman made the clarifica- tion about the employers not being lia- ble, the fact that the premiums and lawsuits do not rise, because we have that experience. It is also important to point out that this is a real bipartisan bill. There has been a lot of work and a lot of compromise to bring this bill forward that addresses issues and has addressed some of the concerns of peo- ple on both sides of the aisle. This is a bipartisan effort to address something that has been of great concern to the American people.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, we will now close and remind our colleagues that we did pass this very bill before in this House. So let us just do the right thing and pass it again. This is my pledge that I want to make to my dear friend who has walked us here this evening, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. McCARTHY), and the gentle- woman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN), let us pass the Patients’ Bill of Rights and then let us gather on the floor to discuss some other needs in health care, such as the nurse and pro- fessional shortage, such as those with- out any access to health care because we still have a long way to go. We are willing and we are prepared, we are going to be here until we can address each of these issues. So I will join my colleagues again on the floor at a fur- ther time.

ENERGY CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, to- night, I want to talk about a couple of subjects.

First of all, I cannot help but reflect upon some of the prior speakers and what they have talked about, espe- cially in terms of our energy crisis. I will only spend a couple of minutes on that, because I addressed it a couple of times in the past also.

It is undeniable true we have an en- ergy crisis in the United States. It is un- deniably true that gas prices are ris- ing, that blackouts, rolling brownouts, all kinds of things are occurring throughout the United States, but es- pecially in California and on the West Coast.

We spend a great deal of time in this body debating as to exactly why that has occurred, and, in fact, there are a number of reasons, of course. They deal mostly with supply problems. We just do not have enough energy. We do not produce enough.

AMERICA’S POPULATION GROWING AT A RAPID RATE DUE TO IMMIGRATION, LEGAL OR ILLEGAL

Mr. TANCREDO. There is a basic problem and there is something below even all of that, which we must iden- tify and talk about from time to time, and that is the fact that America’s population is growing at a rapid rate.

That population growth is a result, not just of the birth rate of the people who have lived in the United States for some period of time, it is the result that over 50 percent of that population growth in the last decade is a result of immigration into the United States, both legal and illegal.

The floor is now open to the examples of the problem. It has an enormous popu- lation in the population primarily as a result of im- migration. The United States Congress
has a responsibility. It is to establish immigration standards, immigration quotas.

We are the only body that can do that. No State can do it. California cannot determine how many people it will let in. It has to deal with however many people come in, and in dealing with that, it has to build more power plants, whether they like it or not.

It has to encourage conservation, and it has to, in fact, tap the natural resources available to it. We will be doing that throughout this Nation as a result of the dramatic increase in population brought about primarily by immigration both legal and illegal.

No one likes to talk about this. It is an issue that oftentimes evokes a lot of emotion on both sides of the issue. There are people who would suggest that even to bring it up is an indication of some sort of ulterior motive that is akin to and always likened to racism.

I have heard that on the floor many times, I will repeat it tonight. It is not where we come from, it is the number of people who come. In fact, we must deal with it.

We may not like having to deal with it, but we may not like the debate that will ensue as a result of any change in our immigration policy, but it must be done. It is for the good of the country, and it has absolutely nothing to do, as far as I am concerned, anyway with racial-related issues. It is a matter of quality of life. It is a matter of energy resources that we have been talking about here.

As I sat here and prepared my remarks, I listened to others speak. The gentleman from Colorado (Mr. McNINNIS) talked for an hour about the energy crisis. Although, he is absolutely correct in all of the things he said in terms of why we are here, I must admit to the gentleman that the one thing that he left out, which I think is extremely important, is the fact that the reason we have this crisis and the reason it will grow throughout the United States is because of the number of people we have in the country and the number of people coming in.

A little over, I will repeat, a little over 50 percent of the growth of this Nation in the last decade was a result of immigration, legal and illegal; 50 percent of the cars on the road; 50 percent of the houses that are popping up in neighborhoods all over the country and what was at one time a pristine landscape. The problem you have getting in to national parks, any of the other kinds of issues come about as a result of population pressures are, in fact, a direct result of this immigration issue.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot come before the House tonight without bringing that particular issue to the attention of the Speaker and to those who may be listening.

LIMIT GOVERNMENT FUNDING RELATING TO ART

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, but that is not the original intent, that was not the original purpose I asked for this time period to address the House.

A short time ago, Mr. Speaker, in Colorado, I was speaking, “an artist” of some sort, and I put the term “artist” in quotation marks, by the name of Marilyn Manson.

I admit I do not have any of this person’s, was I going to say, gentleman, but I am really not positive what he or she or it is, I am just saying, I do not have their particular records in my cabinet. I had read something about this person’s particular “artistic” accomplishments.

I had a call one day, this was about 2 weeks ago or 3 weeks ago, I guess, from a gentleman in Colorado who was concerned about the fact that this person Mr. Manson, Mrs. Manson, Ms. Manson, whatever, was coming in, and he was concerned. Because in the past, this particular rock idol had offered to come in and perform for the people who were responsible for the deaths of the children at Columbine High School.

Hear me, Marilyn Manson would come in to do a concert for the people who killed them. There was concern about this kind of individual coming in to Colorado again and spewing his filth. So this person called our office here. The gentleman that called, I believe, was Jason Janz.

Mr. Janz said, look, we are trying to organize some sort of boycott. We think that people should just avoid going to hear this particular performer. He said, can we use your name in our advertisement, or whatever they were going to do, and I cannot remember now whether it was a particular person who would support our efforts or not.

I said to Mr. Janz, well, yes, you can. I can certainly understand why you would be concerned. I do not think people should go myself; whether they do or not is, of course, their own decision to make.

Anyway, Mr. Janz used my name in some sort of advertising or publication, I do not know what it was, saying that these people have also suggested that people should not go to this particular concert.

We had a storm of reaction to that. There was a lot of protests, a lot of people called our office here and in Colorado, in Littleton and said, how dare you? How dare you, a Member of Congress, try to sensor this particular performer?

I was, in a way, shocked, because, of course, censorship is a term that can be defined. It is defined in the dictionary as “to suppress” and this is censorship. It means someone preventing someone from expressing themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I tried to explain to the people who called my office that, in fact, I really was not trying to sensor this particular “artist”; that I really did not care less what he or she or it did. It was just that when I was asked whether people should participate in this kind of garbage, I would say, no, they should not. That is my opinion.

Their point of view was that I should be silenced; that I was allowed to say such a thing; that I should not be allowed to criticize this particular performer or anybody else, I suppose, that they felt was a particularly important personage in the entertainment world.

This whole thing was a fascinating sort of phenomenon, because eventually Manson came to Colorado. It was just last week or so, did his or her thing. I am sure there was a large crowd and everything was, you know, just pretty fine.

I do not know if people enjoyed it or not. I do not know, and I truly do not care. But the debate surrounding this event was, I think, perfectly in an article that was in the Rocky Mountain News.

I am going to read it here. It is relatively short. It was written by a friend of mine, his name is Mike Rosen. He does a daily radio show in Colorado and writes a weekly column for the Rocky Mountain News.

And it goes as follows: “Greet Manson with due scorn.” That is the title. It says, “I personally, I think the rank demagoguery of Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle is far more dangerous to the well-being of our republic than the sordid rantings of shock rocker Marilyn Manson. But the last thing I’d do is silence either of them.”

If you’re going to allow free speech, you must take the risk that someone might listen. While incitement-to-riot, slander, and yelling ‘fire’ in a crowded theater are not tolerated in our society, expression of ideas that are merely offensive is.

If we voted on who could speak and who couldn’t, Billy Graham would probably win and Marilyn Mason probably would lose. But we don’t put it to a vote because this isn’t a democracy. Our constitutional republic protects the rights of individuals, even unpopular ones.

Actually, Manson’s June 21 Denver appearance at Ozzfest is not really a First Amendment issue. The First Amendment restricts government’s abridgement of free speech.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

Mr. Speaker. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The SPEAKER pro tempore reminds Members that the rules of the House prohibit characterization of Members of the Senate even though not their own remarks.

Mr. TANCREDO. “The First Amendment restricts government’s abridgement of free speech. But the government hasn’t threatened to muzzle Manson. He will not be barred from performing by any government officials.”
The opposition to his performance here has come from private groups led by Baptist youth minister Jason Janz, and others, who protest his message. I've heard and read enough of it, dutifully, to get the point. This from his newest CD 'Antichrist Superstar': I will bury God in my warm spit. I went to God just to see. And I was looking at me. When I'm God everyone dies.’’ Very enlightening.

“I find Manson neither thought-provoking nor profound. He offers mostly sophomoric drivel (not that the work of Dion and the Belmonts, from my era, was exactly Shakespeare, but it was good to dance to and at least it wasn’t destructive.) To be sure, there’s demand for Manson’s kind of bile from troubled, angry, defiant, depressed, macabre, antisocial and sociopathic adolescent and arrested-adolescent audiences. And when you’re high on drugs, gibberish can pass for wisdom.

“If it weren’t for Manson playing this role, someone else would, and others do. He claims to be an artist, crafting a poetic, philosophical message. More likely, he’s just another crass entertainment opportunist capitalizing on a market niche. You might say the same of Alice Cooper, but Cooper has always done his thing with a wink, not to be taken seriously. It was obvious sherrick. Heck, Cooper’s a Republican, a big baseball fan, and a 4-handicap golfer. Compared to Manson, Alice Cooper is Dr. Laura. In his heyday, Cooper sold the bizarre: Manson spews the drivel. (And I’ll throw in my psychozarre kind of sexual connotation, not just connotation, but aspects that you can imagine. That really a lot of this hatred of Christianity, and the most bizarre kind of sexual connotation, not just connotation, but aspects that you can imagine. That really a lot of this stuff that they have been funding over these years, I almost hate to say it, but I wish we could put up here one of these signs that say “be careful, the following may not be suitable for viewing by young people” or whatever, because it is certainly some of the nastiest sort of thing. I will try to avoid being too incredibly graphic, but I guess it is pretty hard to suggest that this is not appropriate for us to discuss here since we paid for it, since we took money from Americans, from hard-working citizens and paid for this stuff that I am going to tell my colleagues about.

“Let us start with the National Endowment for the Arts was criticized for funding this New York theater which staged the play “Corpus Christi”, a blasphemous play depicting Jesus having sexual relations with his apostles.

“By the way, a great deal of what has happened here, a great deal of what the NEA chooses support has a decidedly homo-erotic, anti-Christian, and certainly not just anti-Christian, but a hatred of Christianity, and the most bizarre kind of sexual connotation, not just connotation, but aspects that you can imagine. That really a lot of this stuff that they choose to do. Okay. One would have thought that the NEA might refrain from funding the Manhattan Theater Club ever again given the theater’s decision to present “Corpus Christi”. Not so. The very next year, the theater was awarded another grant of $37,000. This year, the Manhattan Theater Club applied for a grant of $213,000. The NEA chose to deny the application.

“Now, what if this had happened in Colorado, everything that I just described and the event had been paid for entirely with tax dollars? Would there not have been a different kind of debate? Would we not have been able to enter into the discussion an argument that, although, certainly, the theater, Manson, should be allowed to perform, no one, certainly I would never prohibit him from doing his thing by law. But the question remains is whether or not someone should be forced to pay for it through the taking away of their tax dollars, providing it for this experience.

“Certainly there would have been an outcry. Certainly people would have said absolutely not. You know, I do not care whether this person does its thing on the stage and spews forth its bilge, I do not care about that. If people want to do it, want to see it, that is their business, and I certainly agree. But making me pay for it through my tax dollars, that is something else entirely.

“No, that would have been an interesting debate, and I wonder how it would have come out. I wonder if the City of Denver, I wonder if the mayor of the City of Denver had agreed to something like that, had put tax dollars into it. I wonder whether or not the mayor would not be in political trouble the next election.

“Would not people in the City say, how could you possibly make me pay for something like this? I think it is horrible. Or even, I do not have an opinion on it, I just have absolutely no desire to fund this particular expression of this particular ‘artist’.

“Well, I would say there would be a legitimate argument. Do my colleagues not, Mr. Speaker? I think that, in fact, that would be a legitimate debate had we paid for that with tax dollars. I think there would have been significant political ramifications and repercussions to be made by the political leaders in Denver.

“But it did not happen that way. It was totally voluntary. People went, paid their price at the door, and went in; and I say, of course, that is fine. They can do what they want to do. If you don’t like what someone would do it, I would tell you no. It does not matter. I would never stop anyone from either going to see this person or, on the other hand, I would never try to stop this person from actually getting on stage and doing whatever it is it does.

“So the question, then, comes as to how we can, every single year, take money from Americans, hard-working Americans, many of whom have to make decisions about, you know, if they are going to pay the rent this month or if they are going to pay their gas bill.

“How can we take money from them to support the, quote, artistic endeavors of others of a similar, well no matter, no matter. Maybe they do have absolutely no argument as to the value, quote, value of the art. It is still absolutely wrong for any of us here to make that sort of elitist decision for all members of society, that we would tax away their money and give it to a particular kind of art or a particular kind of artist. How can we justify that?

“I guess, to a certain extent, I am going to have to actually talk about what we have been funding over these years. I almost hate to say it, but I wish we could put up here one of these signs that say “be careful, the following may not be suitable for viewing by young people” or whatever, because it is certainly some of the nastiest sort of thing. I will try to avoid being too incredibly graphic, but I guess it is pretty hard to suggest that this is not appropriate for us to discuss here since we paid for it, since we took money from Americans, from hard-working citizens and paid for this stuff that I am going to tell my colleagues about.

“Let us start with the National Endowment for the Arts was criticized for funding this New York theater which staged the play “Corpus Christi”, a blasphemous play depicting Jesus having sexual relations with his apostles.

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the Women Make Movies, that is what it is called, by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA), chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

At the time, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) noted that the NEA gave over more than $100,000 over a 3-year period to Women Make Movies, that is the name of this organization, which distributed numerous pornographic films such as "Sex Fish", "Watermelon Woman", and "Blood Sisters". These films included depictions of explicit lesbian pornography, oral sex, and sadomasochism.

In 1997, the American Family Association distributed to most Members of Congress clips of some of these and other pornographic films distributed by Women Make Movies.

Criticism of the NEA for funding a group that distributes pornographic works was dismissed by the agency which funded Women Make Movies as late as 1999, giving two grants, one for $12,000, one for $30,000. The Women Makes Movies continues to distribute hard core pornography.

Then there is the Wooly Mammoth Theater Company, a Washington, D.C. theater, a frequent recipient of NEA money, generated controversy in the past for NEA when it staged Tim Miller's one-man performance titled "My Queer Body". This play describes what it is like to have sex with another man, climbs into the lap of a spectator. I do not even want to read this.

Shrugging off the controversy this year, the NEA gave the theater $28,000. Wooly Mammoth's 2000 season, this was last year actually, will include the production "Preaching to the Perverted", written and performed by Holly Hughes, who herself has been the cause of controversy.

Hughes sued the U.S. Government for refusing to fund her indecent work and lost. The Supreme Court ruling was that NEA was not obliged to fund pornography. Despite this Court's ruling, the NEA is still choosing to pay for Holly Hughes' offensive work through its support of Wooly Mammoth. In the Wooly Mammoth's Internet catalog:

"Preaching to the Perverted" is described as follows: "If you loved the solo extravagances of Tim Miller", the following is mentioned, "you won't want to miss this unique and irreverent evening of legal and sexual politics."

Then there is the Whitney Museum of American Art. It has been a regular recipient of NEA funds for over the years and several times provided fodder for the critics. This in recent years included a work by Joel-Peter Witkin titled "Maquette for Crucifix", a naked Jesus surrounded by sadomasochistic obscured and many graphic portrayals of corpses and body parts.

Another Whitney exhibit was a film by Suzie Silver titled "A Spy". It depicts Jesus Christ as woman standing naked with breasts exposed.

Again, this may be hard for it even go through, it is certainly hard to describe. But we paid for it. We appropriated money in this House. We took money from citizens in this country and paid for this. So it is only right that we should be forced to have to hear that we paid for as grotesque as it is. It is hard for me to read it. I am sure it is hard for many people to hear it. I do not like having to do it. But, in fact, you paid for it. America. You might as well understand what you bought.

Incredibly, Whitney also included "Piss Christ", Andres Serrano's photograph of a crucifix in a jar of urine, the very same work which began the NEA controversy in 1989, as well as a film by porn-star Annie Sprinkle entitled "The Sluts and Goddesses Video Workshop or How to be a Sex Goddess in 101 Easy Steps", and on and on and on.

Walker Art Center, a performance at this Minneapolis theater and NEA recipient, outdid everyone. A Democrat from West Virginia, and many other Members of Congress.

To make a statement about AIDS, artist Ron Athey, who was HIV positive pierced his body with needles, cut designs into the back of another man, blotted the man's blood with paper towels and set the towels over the audience on a clothes line. Then NEA chair Jane Alexander defended the performance, and the Walker Arts Center has continued to receive NEA funds for several years. This year's take was a couple years ago, this year's take for the avant-garde center is $70,000.

The NEA was criticized in 1997 for funding the Museum of Contemporary Art in New York because of the work of Carollee Schneemann, an artist credited with inspiring Miss Sprinkle whose pornographic funding have caused a lot of problems for the NEA also. I hesitate to even go into what that one was about.

Franklin Furnace, New York. This New York theater frequently receives NEA funds. The theater's performance often promotes homosexuality and blasphemous morality. Its year 2000 grant, $19,000.

The Theater for New York City, the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights brought this New York's theater to national attention recently because of its anti-Catholic bigotry. The theater staged the play "The Pope and the Witch", depicting the Pope called John Paul II, as a heroin-addicted paranoid advocating birth control and the legalization of drugs. The theater received a grant in 1997. The Americans paid for this, $30,000 in 1997 and $12,000 in the year 2000. I will not go on with that in description here audibly tonight. It is just too revolting even for me to deal with. But my point is this, that all of this I consider to be absolute garbage. That is my opinion. I cannot imagine anyone wanting to see it. I cannot certainly imagine wanting to participate in it. I certainly cannot believe that anyone would have the audacity to suggest that we have to take money from people who have the same feeling as I do about this and give it to these performers in order for there to be a good art thriving in America.  

It is ridiculous. It is idiotic. We have had an interesting discussion, as I say, over the whole issue as it came through the Congress of the United States, and there are many aspects of this that I think need to be discussed. Now, by the way, I suppose I should mention, that those of us who were opposed to funding the National Endowment for the Arts failed in our attempt to reduce the funding of $150 million. But it is not just this kind of pornographic trash that it funds with which I take exception. I believe it is absolutely wrong for us to be making a decision in this body as to what is appropriate, what is good art or what is good television programming or radio. I refer now, of course, to National Public Radio, National Public Television, which we again take money from everyone in America and we fund.

Now, I happen to listen to National Public Radio. I enjoy many, many of its programs. My point is, however, the idea that my taste in either television or radio is something that should be the standard for the Nation. Because I happen to enjoy National Public Radio I will tax everyone in this country to help support it. Is that not somewhat bizarre?

Let me read from the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia August 18, 1787. This is incredibly amazing and profound in a way because, as we see, the Founding Fathers dealt with all the problems that we confront every single day and they really had an insight that bears reflecting upon. 1787, August 18. Charles Pinckney of South Carolina rose to urge that Congress be authorized to "establish seminaries for the promotion of literature and the arts and sciences." Modest proposal; right? He suggested that the Congress of the United States be authorized to establish seminaries for the promotion of literature and of science.

Now, remember, seminaries had a different connotation in this particular time period. We are not talking about necessarily religious institutions. In this case he was talking about intellectual pursuits, educational institutions for science solely. His proposal was immediately voted down. In the words of one delegate, the only legitimate role for government in promoting culture and the
June 27, 2001

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

12175

arts was “the granting of patents, i.e. protecting the rights of authors and artists, to make money from their creation[s].” That was the actual legitimate role for government in promoting culture and the arts.

The framers treasured books and music, but they treasured limited government far more. A federally approved artist was as unthinkable to them as a federally approved church or newspaper. This is why the Constitution does not so much as have a hint at subsidizing artists or cultural organizations. It is why Americans have always been skeptical about the entanglement of art and State. And it is why so many artists have snorted at the notion that art depends upon the patronage of a Washington elite.

And that is a very good way of portraying what happens here. It is incredibly elitist for us to say we know in this body, the 435 Members of the House, the 100 Members of the Senate and the President of the United States, we know, at least a majority of us know, what is the best kind of art for the American citizens to observe or participate in. Incredibly elitist. Incredibly elitist for us to suggest that the particular television programming that we believe to be uplifting or stimulating or whatever is appropriate enough to tax everybody to support. What gives us this incredible attitude? Is it the fact, of course, that we make many decisions here all the time that tend to make us all feel, I suppose, pretty omnipotent and omniscient, because we know everything and we have power over everything and, naturally, we should be able to determine what is good art; what is good television; right?

The argument for television especially is the one that confounds me. Every year people come into my office and talk about the need to support, publicly support, public television. We need to take tax dollars away from people and do that. And I always suggest to them that maybe, maybe 20 years ago they could have made an argument for some sort of alternative television programming, because there were only three major broadcasting systems and relatively little choice. I suppose among these three different broadcasting systems. They could have perhaps made the point, well, there is just a need for a different kind of television programming and no one is going to produce it, so, therefore, let us go ahead and take tax dollars away from people and provide it.

They could have made that point. I would not have agreed with them, but it would have been a much more logical position to take than coming in here today to this House, in this year of 2001, and saying there is not enough diversity on television; we need to take money from everybody in America to fund my brand of television because it is better, it is better for people, it is more intellectual, more highbrow. It is not needed for people to have this available to them. You know, what 150, or heaven knows how many actual stations there are out there with cable television. I certainly have lost count myself. All I know is there is no one, I believe, no one that can argue that there is not diversity in programming on television today. And yet our particular brand, our particular idea of what good television is is what we say in this body everyone is going to pay for. Again, it seems a bit peculiar to me.

I actually did a program in Colorado on public television, a sort of talking head show. I used to do it every Friday, and I enjoyed it. And every year they had a period of time that the station other particular station to stay on the air. Again, it is certainly not because I other particular station when you were on it? And I would do it. Every single year I would go on and say, if you want to support this, if you think that we in fact are doing something good enough in terms of television that you believe it should be continued, then I encourage you to get out your checkbook and send this station money. And I am more than willing to do that. I did that, as I say, every single year, because that is exactly the way “public television” should be funded, by donations.

They then would come to me, the same station would come to me as a Member of Congress and say, how could you not then vote for funding for our station when you were on it? And I would always say, look, if the program was so good that I could not get people to watch that program and we could get them to contribute, then of course it was not good programming and I probably should have been kicked off and you should have found somebody else.

But the idea that I would come here to the Congress and vote for money to make sure that that particular station stayed on the air is crazy, any more than I would vote for money for any other particular program to stay on the air. Again, it is certainly not because I am particularly opposed to the kind of programming they have. It is maybe fine. Some of it is fine, some of it is lousy from my point of view. But that does not matter. It is just my opinion. But it is absolutely wrong for me to come to this body and vote to force everyone in this country to support my brand of programming.

Dr. Robert Samuelson said some time ago that the funding of cultural agencies by the Federal Government is highbrow pork barrel, and I certainly agree. We are taking from the poor to subsidize the rich. It is the reverse Robin Hood theory here. In fact, most of the programming on these stations, every last bit of the “arts” of the NEA has absolutely no appeal whatsoever to the bulk of America, the majority of Americans, certainly Americans of low income. They are not really interested by and large in that kind of entertainment. Again, if they are, that is fine. They can make their own decisions about it, but it is incredible to me that we can do this; that we can take money from them and provide support for materials and for programming that is only really enjoyed, I say only, but primarily enjoyed by a different group of people, and most of the time people more well off.

There is also the issue of the corruption of the artists and scholars that we fund. It is I think absolutely true, no one can deny, that as you and I hear for any length of time disagrees with the fact that government funding of anything involves government control. That insight of course is part of our folk wisdom. He who pays the piper calls the tune, as they say. And it is quite true. We never give out a dollar here in this body without also saying how it should be spent. Those are the strings we attach to it. And when we do that for the “arts,” it has a corrupting influence on it. Artists and want-to-be artists begin to gravitate toward what they think the government is going to fund and find themselves sort of chasing the government dollar.

The influence of government funding of the arts is a negative one and a corrupting one. The politicization of what- ever the Federal cultural agencies touch was driven home by Richard Goldstein, a supporter of the National Endowment for the Humanities himself. He pointed out that “the NEH has a ripple effect on university hiring and tenure, and on the kinds of research undertaken by scholars seeking support. Its chairman shapes the bounds of that support. In a broad sense he sets standards that affect the tenure of textbooks and the content of curriculum. Though no chairman of the NEH can single-handedly direct the course of American education, he can nurture the nascent trends and take advantage of informal opportunities to persuade me that “the NEH fund can persuade with the cudgel of Federal funding out of sight but hardly out of mind.”

Then, finally, every time we debate this issue we are confronted by people who will say that we must do this, we must in fact provide money for the arts community, the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, because of the effect that the arts have on our spirit, the soul, the uplifting nature of the arts; that to provide public funding for this is a good because of the way it in fact changes the culture, and they would suggest, for the positive. Well, what if, Mr. Speaker, I came before the
body and suggested that there was another kind of experience that does exactly that; that provides a tremendous amount of benefit to the Nation; that does amazing things for the soul, uplifting in nature; that it can change a person's attitude about life; that it can motivate you to do great things, all these things I have heard on the floor as to the reason why we have to fund the arts?

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that there is another argument I could make using exactly the same logic. What if I were to come before the body and say, I know something that we should be doing that does all of the things I have just said, is an incredible influence on our lives, that provides an outlet for emotional needs of millions of people, and it is called religion and I am going to ask this body to appropriate $150 million this year for religion.

Now, the first thing that someone would not do this because there is this wall of separation that exists in the minds of many, but nowhere in the Constitution, by the way, that separates church and State. But the real reason why we cannot do it and the reason I would never suggest it because the minute we decide to fund religion in this body, we will then begin to decide whose religion, what brand of religion. What about this particular denomination? Why should they not be funded as opposed to that denomination?

Someone somewhere would have to make a decision. So we would establish an Endowment for Religion, and we would appoint some people to it. We would say we will give them the money because Congress does not want to get into the battle about which religion to fund. We will give $150 million to the National Endowment for Religion, and they will make the decision because they are the experts. They know what is best. If they give it all to the Baptists, that is fine. If they split it up with the Jews, the Catholics, the Presbyterians, whatever, it is their decision to make. It is their $150 million. They will make the decision. How many Members in this body would agree with such a thing? No one. I suggest that we would not get very many votes for such a proposal. And rightly so.

It is not our place because the minute that we start doing that, we are automatically discriminating if we pick one over another, which must be done. There is absolutely no difference, Mr. Speaker, none whatsoever, in the funding of the arts and the funding of religion. Each one of those things has its particular brand. It appeals to certain individuals and not others. Somebody has to make a decision about which one of these things gets funded, and then we will come to the House and hold up a list of things that has been funded by that organization and some people will be outraged by it, as I imagine there were some tonight as I was going through the list of things that we have funded that the government has paid for. Some people will listen and say that is great stuff. I wish a billion dollars was put into it.

What happens is there is discrimination in this thing through the list of things we have funded that the government has paid for. Some artist gets funded, some artist does not, and that means somebody is making a decision about which is better. I suggest that is an impossible decision to make for everyone. It is absolutely appropriate for the body gets one, every one artist gets funded, some artist does not, and that means somebody is making a decision about which is better. I suggest that is an impossible decision to make for everyone. It is absolutely appropriate for the body to appropriate $150 million this year for religion.

Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy that rears its head here, certainly daily, but on this particular this debate about the arts and the funding of the arts and the funding of the National Endowment for the Arts, public broadcasting and all of the rest, this hypocrisy is overwhelming. It is so stark.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that we are underestimating the idea of culture war. We have heard that term many times. It is a war of competing ideas and world views. On one side we have people who believe in living by a set of divinely moral absolutes; or the very least, they believe that following such a moral code represents the best way to avoid chaos and instability. On the other side, we have people who insist that morality is a moral decision and any attempt to enforce it is viewed as oppression. That war is a real one which is carried out every single day in the halls of our schools, around the watercooler of our businesses, in the newspapers of the Nation, on television. In every form of communication, the culture war is ongoing. There is a battle for the soul, for the mind, for the actual personality, if you will, of the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I think that is pretty much accepted as being true. We know that there are these competing sets of values out there trying to grab us and get us on their side, whatever that might be.

Now, I happen to believe completely that there is such a thing as good art, good music. I believe that it can be all of the things that people say. I believe we can be inspired by it. We can be motivated by art to do wonderful things. But I also suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if there is such a thing as good art, good music, good literature, then there is such a thing as bad art, bad music and bad literature. And it has the opposite effect of the good art. I believe that is true. That is my personal observation, my personal belief.

I choose not to impose that belief on anyone else. The power of persuasion, the influence of the power of government to tax and help one side in it as opposed to another.

Let us simply talk about it here. But, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that there again is no more hypocritical thing that we do here in the Congress of the United States than to take money away from people in support of a particular brand of art or music and then argue about whether or not that should happen with regard to religion.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DAVIS (at the request of Mr. ARMLEY) for today after 2:00 p.m., and tomorrow, on account of attending a funeral.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

The following Members (at the request of Ms. SOLIS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. SOLIS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

June 27, 2001