



LET'S DEBATE...

Federal Funding of the Arts



Federal Funding of the Arts...A Very Brief History

- 1965** President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, establishing the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).
- 1967** President Johnson signs the Public Broadcasting Act into law, establishing the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).
- 1969** The CPB forms the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) to distribute programming to federally funded, locally produced television stations across the country.
- 1970** Federally funded National Public Radio (NPR) is created.
- 1981** President Ronald Reagan's administration seeks to eliminate the NEA and NEH.
- 1989** In response to photographer Andres Serrano's controversial work "Piss Christ," an anti-obscenity clause is added to the NEA's funding regulations, banning federal funds for arts projects that "may be considered obscene."
- 1995** Congress debates dismantling the NEA, the NEH, and the CPB. Instead, those programs' budgets are cut for the following year.
- 2017** President Donald Trump announces plans to eliminate federal funding of the arts in the 2018 budget.



Should the U.S. federal government support public art programs and public broadcasting?

Federal funds supporting the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) 2016 budget: \$445 million
 Federal funds supporting the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) 2016 budget: \$148 million
 Federal funds supporting the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) 2016 budget: \$148 million



No

Yes



- Public television and public radio have a leftist, liberal agenda.
- Arts organizations and public broadcasting receive enough support through private funding and donations.
- Federal funding of the arts supports the "cultural elite," meaning that wealthier arts patrons benefit more than lower-income communities.
- Federal funding of the arts discourages would-be private donors of the arts.
- Despite the NEA's "obscenity clause," some feel federal funds support the creation of indecent art.
- Artists' creativity and independence is curtailed by government subsidizing.
- The arts are not a necessity, and federal money would be better spent on infrastructure, education, and poverty.

- Federal arts funding supports projects in every congressional district of the country.
- Public television and radio provide essential services and programming to rural communities.
- Public broadcasting and radio provide essential safety services and information during national crises.
- Many local public-television and public-radio stations will not be able to function without federal support.
- Federal funding of the arts supports jobs, community development, children's programs, and tourism.
- Arts spending accounts for less than 0.02 percent of the federal budget.
- The U.S. government spends much less on arts funding than some European countries.

In Opposition of Federal Funding of the Arts

In Support of Federal Funding of the Arts

“The new conservative administration and congressional majority coming in have a responsibility to the conservative base not to continue to fund a ‘public broadcaster’ that leaves half the nation feeling ignored.” -- Mike Gonzalez, Heritage Foundation senior fellow

“US taxpayers deserve a fiscally responsible government, a system that allows states to do more and allocates money only to the most essential programs.” -- Congressman Doug Lamborn, R-Colo.

“Because it is free of the scramble for ratings, public broadcasting has room for experimentation and risk-taking. Public broadcasting is for all Americans. It can meet the needs of audiences that number in the millions but are seldom served anywhere else.”-- President Jimmy Carter

“It is the mark of a great democracy to support the arts, which are an expression of what makes us human.”--In a statement made by the Association of Art Museum Directors

What are your feelings about federal funding of the arts?
 Want to know more?

Visit Public Funding of the Arts on ProQuest's SIRS Issues Researcher.

Created by Michelle Sneiderman, Content Editor Senior, ProQuest
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