

# National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities

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# Eliminate the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities

## RECOMMENDATION

Congress should eliminate the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities, including all of its sub-agencies.

## RATIONALE

The National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities consists of the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The foundation was created as an independent agency by the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965.<sup>1</sup> Congress should eliminate the foundation and all its parts to reflect that federal funding and involvement in the arts, culture, and humanities is outside the proper scope of the federal government. Such activities and support are reserved for civil society and state and local government.

Federal funding for the arts and humanities is neither necessary nor prudent. According to USA Giving's latest report, charitable giving to the arts, culture, and

humanities reached \$17.07 billion in 2015.<sup>2</sup> In comparison, federal funding in the hundreds of millions is a mere rounding error.

Private individuals and organizations are donating to the arts and humanities at their own discretion. Advocating the elimination of federal funding should not be conflated with lack of support for the arts, culture, and humanities. There is no compelling public policy reason for the federal government to use its coercive power of taxation to compel taxpayers to support cultural organizations and activities. Such powers should be properly limited to constitutional federal causes while the arts, culture, and humanities should be allowed to flourish without federal support or interference.

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## ADDITIONAL READING

- Laurence Jarvik, "Ten Good Reasons to Eliminate Funding for the National Endowment for the Arts," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounders* No. 1110, April 29, 1997.

## ENDNOTES

1. 20 U.S. Code § 951 (2010), <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Legislation.pdf> (accessed May 8, 2017).
2. Jean O'Brien, "Charitable Donations Hit Record for Second Year in a Row, at Estimated \$373.25 Billion," Giving USA, June 13, 2016, <https://givingusa.org/giving-usa-2016/> (accessed May 8, 2017).