from Phyllis Schlafly

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Exposing the Continuing Obscenities of the NEA

Three cheers for Jesse Helms! He made the U.S. Senators vote very specifically on how they are spending the taxpayers' money. The refrain of an old popular song was probably ringing in their ears: "I didn't wanna do it. I didn't wanna do it."

It wasn't that they didn't wanna spend the money -- it was that they didn't wanna take responsibility for precisely how it is being spent. But they did.

By 68 to 28, the Senate passed an amendment offered by Senator Helms (R-NC) to bar the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) from spending taxpayers I dollars for "patently offensive" art or stage performances depicting sexual or excretory activities. The Helms amendment was based on the Supreme Court guidelines set forth in the case of FCC v. Pacifica.

The inherent reasonableness and righteousness of the He1ms resolution brought into line even such ultra-1iberal Senators as Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Herbert Kohl (D-WI), and presidential hopeful Bob Kerrey (D-NE). Presidential aspirant Tom Harkin (D-IA) was conveniently absent.

Senator Don Nickles (R-OK), who supported the Helms amendment, said, "I do not even know how to talk about what the NEA is funding because it is so filthy, so rotten, so perverse, that it is difficult to convey it without using language that I will not read."

Senator Helms had the same problem in trying to describe what his amendment would prohibit. "The same newspapers that falsely accuse me of censorship," he said, "wil1 not publish the pictures and the rottenness in the papers. The television stations will not carry it on their stations because they know the FCC would knock them off the air first thing tomorrow morning if they did. It is just that bad."

Helms added, "There is nothing 'arty' about somebody going on the stage and urinating. That is one of the pieces of 'art' that is being subsidized by the National Endowment for the Arts."

We will probably be reading newspaper editorials across the country about how Senator Helms is “censoring” art -- even Shakespeare! How primitive can he be! But the liberals who weep crocodile tears about “Shakespeare” being denied taxpayer funds probably will not tell the truth about how an NEA grant is perverting Shakespeare.

The NEA gave $323,000 of taxpayers’ money to the New York Shakespeare Festival which included a presentation of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream" by a Portuguese-speaking cast of actors who appear on stage nude, topless or in G-strings. The audiences may not understand Portuguese, but, according to the New York Daily News, “Body language is another thing."

During last year’s Congressional session, Congress gave the NEA an undeserved raise and, without threatening any cutoff of funds, meekly asked the agency to adhere to “general standards of decency.” To the acclaim of the liberal media, Chairman Frohnmayer responded that he would not be a “Decency Czar” and then went on to give taxpayers I grants this year to more of the same kind of alleged “art” which Americans find so patently offensive.

The NEA gave a $637,000 grant to the New York State Arts Council, which allocated some of this taxpayers' money to help promote a film called “Jesus Christ Condom.” Shown at the Third Annual New York International Festival of Gay and Lesbian Films, the movie depicts an AIDS activist dressed up as Jesus Christ and wearing a crown of thorns, who carries on a 30-minute tirade against Christianity while standing on the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Sexually explicit lines are recited by the actor portraying Christ while promoting condoms, and later a member of ACT-UP crumbles the Holy Communion and steps on it.

The NEA gave a $12,000 grant to the San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. The NEA could not be surprised as to what it was funding; the NEA gave previous grants to this outfit in 1988, 1989, and l990.

The NEA gave $250,000 to the PBS-TV “Point of View" series, which included the film "Tongues Untied,” plus $5,000 to this film's producer. An advocacy piece promoting homosexuality among blacks, “Tongues Untied” is so offensive that 206 of the 341 PBS stations did not broadcast it, and another 91 delayed it until after 11 p.m.

The NEA gave $25,000 to an explicit, violent and altogether disgusting movie entitled “Poison," which the theaters described as about “deviance” and the

producer bragged is about “unabashed homoeroticism.” NEA chairman John Frohnmayer is so out of touch with public opinion outside the Beltway that he held a news conference on Good Friday to assert that “Poison” is “entirely consistent with everything I have always stood for and tried to articulate in the agency.”

Congressional liberals are threatening to remove the Helms amendment in the Senate-House conference committee. This will be a good test of whether Congress has any respect for the American taxpayers.