

Over the past two hundred years the role of the federal government has changed many times in many ways. The Congress and the President of the United States are continually expanding the government into new areas of interest. One area that the federal government has become involved with is patronage of the arts. The federal government, however, should not be involved in this endeavor for it is far too complicated to be decided upon at the national level.

The lack of capable artists is not an immediate threat to the security of the United States of America. The federal government of the United States should only concern itself with matters of national security and national supremacy. Art does not fall into the category. Patronage of the arts is a task far better suited for state and local governments.

An article in USA Today dated October 2, 1997 discussed how the Richmond (Virginia) Symphony benefited from an NEA grant. The article detailed how the Symphony performs at schools statewide and is used to attract businesses to the Richmond area. If the Richmond Symphony is so instrumental to the success of the city of Richmond and the state of the Virginia, then why can't the State of Virginia or the City of Richmond contribute \$200,000 to keep the Symphony playing?

Historically patrons of the arts had some say as to the final product of their money; however, when the federal government begins to say some art is acceptable and some art is not acceptable someone will always accuse the government of censorship. Though the idea of by not supporting a certain type of art the government is censoring that type of art

is preposterous, it is true that in a nation of two-hundred and fifty million people the answer to the question of what art is can never be satisfactorily answered.

Though still a daunting task on the state level, it is far easier for a group of three million to ten million citizens to come to a consensus than it is an entire nation. Every region of the country has a different value system; people in California have a different set of values than people in Alabama. Therefore it is easier for each to state to decided what art is based on the values of that state is far easier than the federal government trying to determine that values of an entire nation.

The United States is not a very monumental country. We, as a nation, have overcome great odds and succeeded at many things; however, there very few great monuments memorializing our great leaders and achievements throughout this nation. The only artwork funded by the Federal government should be artwork to be displayed on Federal lands or on Federal property memorializing the greatness of this nation.

Art is not an endeavor the Federal government is capable of successfully funding. The nation is far too large for a consensus of acceptability to ever be reached; therefore, government funding for arts should be left to the fifty state governments and the numerous local governments. The only art of concern to federal government should be that memorializing the achievements of this great nation.