

CUT FUNDS TO NEA, NEH, NPR, PBS

Below is the text of a letter sent by Bill Donohue on March 22 to every member of the U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Committees in support of President Trump's budget proposal to include no funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Public Radio, and the Public Broadcasting Service.

Below the letter is Donohue's statement to the media, detailing our conflicts with these agencies over their repeated use of taxpayer dollars for attacks on Christianity.

The proposed budget by President Trump allows for no funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Public Radio, and the Public Broadcasting Service. In weighing your decision, I urge you to consider the assaults on Christianity that these agencies have engaged in for decades.

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights is the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. Our primary mission is to combat discrimination against Catholics and defamation against the institutional Church. More broadly, we seek to combat all assaults on Christianity.

The enclosed news release offers explicit information detailing the kinds of attacks the Catholic League has had with these organizations. It is indefensible to maintain that Christians must pay for artistic expressions that insult, degrade, and trash their religion, yet at the same time are not permitted to adorn the public square with symbols that celebrate their religion. The duplicity must end.

In the interest of fairness, I appeal to your good will in putting an end to these unprovoked attacks on Christianity in general, and Catholicism, in particular. Thank you for your consideration.

WHY FUNDS SHOULD BE CUT

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), National Public Radio (NPR), and the Public Broad-casting Service (PBS), are all subsidized by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). The Trump administration is right to propose a budget that completely guts these entities of federal funding.

That is why we asked members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to honor the president's request. Justice demands that these agencies should be eliminated: Taxpayers should not be forced to pay for assaults on their religion.

Christians constitute roughly 75 percent of the population; Catholics are approximately 25 percent of the total. In the name of "art," these Americans are expected to pay for irreverent exhibits, but depictions that are reverential—such as a nativity scene outside City Hall—are denied a dime. It's time we stopped giving the arts a privileged position and cut their funding. The same is true for publicly funded radio and TV programming that has a history of insulting the majority of Americans.

The CPB was founded in the 1960s, and it has been plagued with problems ever since. In the late 1980s, the NEA funded Andre Serrano's "Piss Christ" and Robert Mapplethorpe's "The Perfect Moment." Serrano took a crucifix and dropped it into a jar of his own urine, branding it art. The NEA gave a Philadelphia museum \$30,000 to display graphic homosexual S&M photos taken by Mapplethorpe.

In 1998, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that there is no

constitutional prohibition against Congress setting decency standards for the NEA. But attempts by the NEA to enforce grant recipients to sign an anti-obscenity pledge went nowhere. This is why Congress must act.

To show how perverse things have become, President Barack Obama not only approved generous grants to the NEA, he actually included \$50 million for the arts as part of his "federal stimulus package." One of the first beneficiaries was a San Francisco outfit, CounterPULSE. It received \$25,000 to pay for employees' salaries. What did the public get from it? The group hosted "a long-running pansexual performance series" called "Perverts Put Out"; it asked the audience to "Join your fellow pervs for some explicit twisted fun."

Catholic League Conflicts with the NEA

- 1995: Ron Athey abused Catholic imagery by indulging in several sexually explicit and vulgar statements, so much so that we wrote a letter to the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee asking for his support in defunding the NEA.
- 1998: We led a demonstration of 3,000 protesters outside the Manhattan Theatre Club, funded by the NEA, for hosting a play, "Corpus Christi," that depicted Jesus having sex with his apostles.
- 1999: We led a demonstration outside the Brooklyn Museum of Art, which received funding from the NEA and the NEH, for its "Sensation" exhibit. It showed a huge portrait of Our Blessed Mother smeared with elephant dung, adorned with pictures of vaginas.
- 2000: The Whitney Museum, an NEA-funded institution, hosted "Sanitation," a vile attack on Mayor Rudy Giuliani for opposing the anti-Catholic "Sensation" exhibit. The Whitney had previously displayed "Abject Art"; it featured depictions of excrement and hard-core pornography.
- 2000: The Theater for the New City Foundation, which

received NEA funds, was host to a play, "The Pope and the Witch," written by Dario Fo, a Stalinist and a vicious anti-Catholic. It depicted Pope John Paul II as a heroin-addicted, paranoid schemer. We wrote to the Appropriations Committee asking members to reconsider funding the NEA.

- 2010: The Smithsonian, which receives 70 cents of every dollar from the taxpayers (via the NEA and NEH), hosted an exhibit, "Hide/Seek," that featured a video showing huge ants crawling all over Jesus on the Cross. We contacted the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, and the video was pulled.
- 2013: The Oklahoma City Theatre Company, an NEA recipient, hosted "The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told," a foul homosexual play that featured homoerotic performances, including simulated sex acts. It also mocked the Bible.
- 2015: The NEA's support for the Milwaukee Art Museum resulted in an exhibition that showcased a portrait of Pope Benedict XVI made up of condoms.

Catholic League Conflicts with NPR

- 1997: On July 5, the Weekend Edition aired a segment with host Scott Simon and musical satirist Tom Lehrer that featured Lehrer singing "The Vatican Rag." It disparaged Catholicism and the Eucharist, including the doctrine of Transubstantiation.
- 2005: NPR questioned the religion of Supreme Court nominee John Roberts. NPR's Lynn Neary wondered that since he is a Catholic whether "that might affect the way he views an issue like abortion, for instance." Nina Totenberg of NPR even went so far as to say that his wife was "a high officer of a pro-life organization. He's got adopted children. I mean, he's a conservative Catholic."
- 2006: During the Easter season, NPR twice took aim at

the divinity of Jesus.

- 2006: Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Turkey was used by NPR as an occasion to lecture the pope on being sensitive to Muslims by not making any overtly Catholic comments or gestures. It cited prayer and kneeling as examples.
- 2007: When Samuel Alito was nominated to the high court, NPR's Dahlia Lithwick said, "People are very, very much talking about the fact that Alito would be the fifth Catholic in the Supreme Court if confirmed."
- 2008: Utah's NPR station, KCPW, featured a skit, "Fair Game with Faith Salie," that mocked Jesus and the Eucharist.
- 2012: Barbara Bradley Hagerty did a piece that was posted on NPR's website that said a Philadelphia priest accused of raping a minor was "not that unusual" for a member of the Catholic clergy.
- 2013: A movie, "Paradise: Faith," depicted a "devout" Catholic woman who masturbates with a crucifix as she is making love to Jesus. It was highly recommended by NPR.
- 2014: An NPR game show, "Wait Wait Don't Tell Me!", made fun of Jesus dying on the Cross. Sexual references to Jesus were also made.

Catholic League Conflicts with PBS

- 1996: FRONTLINE blamed Catholicism for the killings of a Catholic maniac, John Salvi. He killed two abortionists from Brookline, Massachusetts. The program functioned as a promo for Planned Parenthood and a hit job on the Catholic Church.
- 2006: It aired a show on Jesus during Lent implying that Christian beliefs are a hoax.
- 2007: "The Secret Files of the Inquisition" was a four-part docudrama that gave voice to Black Legend propaganda. The horrors it attributed to the Catholic Church have been wholly discredited by scholars such as

Henry Kamen.

- 2009: PBS banned member stations from carrying new religious programs. It said, without foundation, that such shows might imply official endorsement. It did not say why only sectarian shows might imply endorsement.
- 2014: PBS aired "Secrets of the Vatican." It was the 48th time that PBS addressed sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. By contrast, it has a history of ignoring this problem in other religions, never mind its widespread existence today in the public schools.

The NEA, NEH, NPR, and PBS have had decades to clean up their act, but they refuse to do so. The time to cut funding is now.