

**STATEMENT OF DR. RALPH G. BEELKE, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,
THE NATIONAL ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

Dr. BEELKE. I have a prepared statement which, in the interest of time, I will summarize briefly to the effect that my statement does have a copy of the resolution recently passed by our association in favor of H.R. 4172 and H.R. 4174.

Briefly, our association has supported arts legislation in past hearings and many of our members have written letters in support of this, which testifies to our interest in it. Our specific interest, of course, is the area of the visual arts, and we would be anxious to point out here this morning, at least so far being the only representatives of the visual arts, that in a sense the United States is the art capital of the world and that much of the leadership at least in the area of painting and some of the other visual arts which is evidenced in this country is due to the encouragement which was received by many of our outstanding artists during the days of the WPA.

While admittedly the WPA was a program designed to solve human problems rather than cultural ones, we are today reaping the rewards of this encouragement and nurture on the part of the Federal Government in the arts.

We would also point out the President Kennedy recently referred to our society as an open one in the relationship to publicity concerning our recent space efforts. History shows that the arts flourish in an open society and we believe that the stipulations given in these bills would maintain the open context under which inventiveness and creativity can flourish.

So that again, to briefly repeat, we are heartily in favor of both of these measures and we recognize that the arts are important and this legislation recognizes the arts as an important part of our national and individual life.

The legislation also gives concrete evidence of support and encouragement and is structured in such a way that the characteristics of our open society are maintained.

Mr. THOMPSON. We thank you very much and might note that for the first time in a number of years when this type legislation has been under discussion we have not had notice of any opposition to it, particularly from a well-known sculptor who has appeared a number of times, Mr. Wheeler Williams. I really almost miss him. He did the Taft Memorial and that may be his valedictory—I do not know—here in Washington.

Dr. BEELKE. I mentioned the WPA thing, I think, largely because Mr. Williams' previous testimony in this committee always referred to this in the negative rather than in a positive way.

Mr. THOMPSON. Yes, Mr. Williams did not approve of anything that was done in the WPA.

Thank you very much for coming, Doctor. We are most grateful to you.

Dr. BEELKE. We appreciate the opportunity to be here.