

You will chair for the following bill.

Senate Bill 406 – Wisconsin Humanities Council

Recommendation

Support the bill in its current form.

Bill History

Introduced on 01/20/98 by **Burke**/Schneider; passage recommended by Senate Committee on Education (8-0); referred to JFC on 02/25/98.

Executive Action Needed

Act on any amendments introduced today.
Recommend passage.

Note

Yes, this is a fair amount of money (\$250,000 GPR), but the Council says that the Sesquicentennial celebration has increased the demand for programs focusing on local and state history. Sounds like the money will be put to good use, and besides, who can argue with preserving our state's rich heritage?



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

One East Main, Suite 301 • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 266-3847 • Fax: (608) 267-6873

March 11, 1998

TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 406: Wisconsin Humanities Council

Senate Bill 406 was introduced on January 20, 1998, and was referred to the Senate Committee on Education. On February 11, 1998, that Committee recommended passage of SB 406 on a vote of eight to zero, and the bill was referred to the Joint Committee on Finance.

BACKGROUND

The Wisconsin Humanities Council (WHC), which consists of 25 volunteer members, is an independent, nonprofit organization which provides support for, and conducts, public programs in the humanities. The Council is currently funded solely through the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and contributions from corporations, foundations and individuals. While the Council is not a governmental agency, its funding flows through the University of Wisconsin System and its staff members, 5.5 FTE permanent positions and a number of student interns, are considered UW-Extension employees. The Council contracts with UW-Extension for administrative services such as accounting and personnel services.

The WHC awards competitive grants ranging from \$500 to \$10,000 to nonprofit organizations and community groups in Wisconsin for humanities programs and projects. Grant recipients include local historical societies, libraries, art museums and cultural centers and are usually required to provide a cash or in-kind match equal to 100% of the grant amount. In addition to these grants, organizations may apply to the WHC for reimbursement of speakers' fees. The Council also maintains a resource center which provides films, traveling exhibits and other materials.

For federal fiscal year 1997, the Council's total revenues were \$734,657, which consisted of \$532,800 in federal NEH funds, \$51,857 in private contributions and \$150,000 in a grant from the Wisconsin Sesquicentennial Commission. The \$150,000 from the Sesquicentennial Commission was part of a \$450,000 grant, most of which will be expended in 1997-98.

SUMMARY OF BILL

SB 406 would provide \$250,000 GPR beginning in 1998-99, in a new, annual appropriation within the UW System, for the Wisconsin Humanities Council.

FISCAL EFFECT

In its fiscal note to SB 406, the University states that the \$250,000 GPR provided in the bill would be awarded by WHC in the form of grants and would not be used for administrative expenses. SB 406 however, would not specify that the funds be used for any particular purpose.

The fiscal note indicates that the GPR funds have been sought due to a decline in NEH funding since 1992, which the Council has dealt with by reducing the maximum grant amount from \$25,000 to \$10,000. According to WHC staff, the Council received \$616,500 in federal fiscal year (FFY) 1991-92 compared to \$532,800 in FFY 1996-97. The NEH grant for FFY 1997-98 is estimated at \$506,800. In addition, the WHC notes that applications for the sesquicentennial grants, which significantly exceeded available funds, indicates that there is unmet demand for funds for programs focusing on local and state history. According to WHC staff, the additional \$250,000 would allow the Council to continue to award these types of grants and to expand its regular grant program.

MO# Passage en

1	BURKE	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	N	A
2	DECKER	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	N	A
	JAUCH	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	N	A
	SHIBILSKI	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	N	A
	COWLES	Y	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	A
	PANZER	Y	N	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	SCHULTZ	Y	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	A
	ROSENZWEIG	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	N	A
	GARD	Y	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	A
	OURADA	Y	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	A
	HARSDORF	Y	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	A
	ALBERS	Y	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	A
	PORTER	Y	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	A
	KAUFERT	Y	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	A
	LINTON	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	N	A
	COGGS	Y	N	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

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