

1985

## Curran, Edward: Confirmation Hearing (1985): News Article 02

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## PANEL IN SENATE REJECTS NOMINEE

Curran, Chosen by Reagan for  
Endowment Post, Termed  
Unqualified for the Job

WASHINGTON, Nov. 19 (AP) — President Reagan's nomination of Edward A. Curran to be chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities was rejected today by a Senate committee that questioned his qualifications and credibility.

More than nine months after William J. Bennett left as the endowment's chairman to become Secretary of Education, the President's choice of Mr. Curran as Mr. Bennett's successor was killed by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee.

On a pair of 8-to-8 tie votes, the committee refused to approve Mr. Curran's nomination or to send it to the Senate floor without a recommendation. Senator Orrin G. Hatch, a Utah Republican who is chairman of the committee, then announced that the nomination would be returned to the White House.

The deciding vote against Mr. Curran, who is deputy director of the Peace Corps, was cast by Senator Robert T. Stafford of Vermont, the lone dissenter among the panel's nine Republicans. All seven Democrats on the committee opposed Mr. Curran.

Albert R. Brashear, a White House spokesman, said in response to the committee's action: "We're disappointed, obviously. We felt Mr. Curran was well-qualified for the position."

Mr. Curran's rejection was believed to be only the third time that a Republican-controlled Senate committee had killed a major Reagan nomination since the President took office in 1981.

Last June 27 the Judiciary Committee killed William Bradford Reynolds' nomination to become Associate Attorney General. In 1981 the Labor and Human Resources Committee refused to send John R. Van de Water's nomination to be chairman of the National Labor Relations Board to the Senate floor for a confirmation vote.

Mr. Curran is a former headmaster of the National Cathedral School for Girls in Washington, and once taught at a private boys' school in Houston. He worked with Mr. Reagan's campaign committee in 1980 and was associate director of the White House office of Presidential personnel in 1981.

In addition to accusing Mr. Curran of having insufficient academic experience, Democrats on the Labor and Human Resources Committee, led by Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, said the 52-year-old nominee lacked "the respect of the nation's scholarly community" and showed a "failure of candor" in previous testimony before the panel.

Senator Pell was chief author of the legislation that created the humanities endowment and the companion National Endowment for the Arts in 1965. The humanities endowment is an independent, grant-making agency that spent more than \$125 million in Federal funds last year to support scholarly and educational projects.

The "failure of candor" allegation, made by Senator Christopher J. Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut, was a reference to Mr. Curran's brief tenure as director of the National Institute of Education in 1981 and 1982.

Senator Dodd said there was a "question of credibility" stemming from Mr. Curran's testimony before the same committee in the fall of 1981 that he would promote the institute's work as the research arm of the Department of Education.

A few months after Mr. Curran was confirmed by the Senate and took office, he wrote Mr. Reagan a letter recommending that the institute be abolished because of influence from "the left." Soon afterward, Mr. Curran was dismissed by then-Education Secretary T. H. Bell.

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