Public Law 95-596
95th Congress

Joint Resolution

Nov. 4, 1978
[S.J. Res. 160]

To initiate preliminary studies for the restoration and renovation of the Pension Building in Washington, District of Columbia, to house a Museum of the Building Arts, and for other purposes.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That (a) the Congress finds and declares that the Federal Building in the District of Columbia, operated and managed by the General Services Administration and known as the Pension Building, is unique, historic, constitutes an architectural treasure belonging to the people of the United States, and must be restored and properly utilized.

Pension Building, D.C.
Restoration and renovation, preliminary studies.

(b) The Congress further declares that the Pension Building would most appropriately be dedicated to the public use as the Nation's Museum of the Building Arts, benefiting this and future generations.

Existing conditions study.

SEC. 102. The Administrator of General Services is authorized and directed to prepare an existing conditions study of the Pension Building, located in the block bounded by Fourth Street, Fifth Street, "F" Street, and "G" Street, Northwest, in the District of Columbia. After consultation with the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, he shall prepare drawings, together with preliminary cost estimates, for the restoration and renovation of the Pension Building, in its entirety, to house the Museum of the Building Arts. Such drawings shall be consistent with and provide space for the functions and facilities proposed in the report of the Committee for a National Museum of the Building Arts, Incorporated, dated January 1978, and on file at the National Endowment for the Arts, including alternative treatment of the facilities listed in subsection 104(d) which may require structural modifications of the Pension Building. Such drawings and estimates, together with the existing conditions study, shall be submitted to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, and to the Committee on Public Works and Transportation of the House of Representatives, not later than November 1, 1978.

Drawings and estimates, submittal to congressional committees.

Report to congressional committees.

SEC. 103. The Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts is requested to report to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, and to the Committee on Public Works and Transportation of the House of Representatives, not later than November 1, 1978, his initial observations and opinions with respect to—

(a) the prospects for private funding of museum operations, including an appraisal listing the potential sources of financial support, together with a preliminary estimate of the amount of such support which might reasonably be anticipated; and

(b) such other factors as, in his opinion, may contribute to the feasibility of the proposed museum.

Report to congressional committees.

SEC. 104. The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution is requested to report to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and to the Committee on Public Works and Transportation of the House of Representatives, not later than November 1, 1978, his initial comments and opinions concerning—

(a) the potential for visitation at the proposed museum, compared to visitation at Smithsonian museums in recent years;

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(b) the potential for interaction between the proposed museum and existing collections and programs of the Smithsonian;

(c) the proportion of total space (based on the Secretary's experience with such Smithsonian Museums as Air and Space, Arts and Industries, and History and Technology) required for (i) inactive storage, (ii) the study of collections housed in the museum; (iii) staff offices; and (iv) public/exhibition use;

(d) the value and approximate costs of providing facilities to accommodate (i) food service; (ii) a museum shop; (iii) a computer service or center; and (iv) an auditorium, together with recommendations for optimum size and desirable features of such facilities.

Definitions.

SEC. 105. As used in this joint resolution, the term—

(a) "building arts" encompasses all practical and scholarly aspects of architecture; and landscape architecture; engineering; building and construction; urban planning, design, physical development, and renewal; and historic preservation;

(b) "museum" means the Museum of the Building Arts, as generally proposed by the Committee for a National Museum of the Building Arts, the primary purpose of which shall be (i) to create in the Nation's Capital a center to exhibit, demonstrate, and encourage contributions to the building arts and sciences, with an emphasis on American initiatives; (ii) to establish and operate a building arts documents archive, and a building arts reference library for citizens and public and private institutions; and (iii) to foster educational programs, to provide a forum for information exchange among professionals in the building arts, and to enhance understanding and appreciation of all facets of the building arts and sciences;

(c) "Administrator" means the Administrator of General Services;

(d) "Chairman" means the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts; and

(e) "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

SEC. 106. The Administrator shall insure that any occupants of the Pension Building shall be temporary pending establishment and occupancy of the building by the National Museum of the Building Arts; and that such occupants shall in no way conflict with, interfere with, or cause to delay efforts toward the restoration and renovation of the building to house the museum.

Appropriation authorizations.

SEC. 107. (a) For the purposes of section 102 of this joint resolution, the Administrator is authorized and directed to expend not to exceed $60,000 from funds available to him for the alteration and repair of buildings.

(b) For the purposes of section 103 of this joint resolution, the Chairman shall expend not more than $10,000 from funds available to him.

(c) For the purposes of section 104 of this joint resolution, the Secretary shall expend not more than $10,000 from funds available to him.

Approved November 4, 1978.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

HOUSE REPORT No. 95-1776 (Comm. on Public Works and Transportation).
SENATE REPORT No. 95-1181 (Comm. on Environment and Public Works).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 124 (1978):
Sept. 15, considered and passed Senate.
Oct. 14, considered and passed House.