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VETOING H.R. 13918—HOUSE DOCUMENT 92-320

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M E S S A G E

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

VETOING H.R. 13918, AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR IMPROVED FINANCING FOR THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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JUNE 30, 1972.—Message together with the accompanying bill referred to the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce and ordered to be printed

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*To the House of Representatives :*

I find it necessary to return without my approval H.R. 13918 which is intended to provide increased financing for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and to modify the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 by making various changes in the structure of the non-commercial, educational broadcasting system.

Public broadcasting can and does make important contributions to our Nation's life by presenting educational and cultural programs of diversity and excellence. Programs such as "Sesame Street" and "The Electric Company" already have begun to repay the far-sighted decision the Nation made in the 1950s when channels were reserved for educational purposes. Public broadcasting deserves to be continued, and to be strengthened.

The legislation before me, however, offers a poor approach to public broadcast financing. It ignores some serious questions which must be resolved before any long-range public broadcasting financing can be soundly devised, and before the statutory framework for public broadcasting is changed.

There are many fundamental disagreements concerning the directions which public broadcasting has taken and should pursue in the future. Perhaps the most important one is the serious and widespread concern—expressed in Congress and within public broadcasting itself—that an organization, originally intended only to serve the local stations, is becoming instead the center of power and the focal point of control for the entire public broadcasting system.

The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 made localism a primary means of achieving the goals of the educational broadcasting system. Localism places the principal public interest responsibility on the individual educational radio and television stations, licensed to serve the needs and interests of their own communities. By not placing adequate emphasis on localism, H.R. 13918 threatens to erode substantially public broadcasting's impressive potential for promoting innovative and diverse cultural and educational programming.

The public and legislative debate regarding passage of H.R. 13918 has convinced me that the problems posed by Government financing of a public broadcast system are much greater than originally thought. They cannot be resolved until the structure of public broadcasting has been more firmly established, and we have a more extensive record of experience on which to evaluate its role in our national life.

This Administration has demonstrated its dedication to the principle of public broadcasting by increasing appropriations to the Corporation sevenfold in the past three years, from \$5 million in FY 69 to \$35 million in FY 72. On top of this, I have requested an additional 30 percent increase for next year to \$45 million. The funding proposed in H.R. 13918, which almost doubles next year's appropriation, and more than doubles the following year's appropriation over FY 1972, is unwarranted in light of the serious questions yet unanswered by our brief experience with public broadcasting.

I urge the continuation of carefully measured annual funding for the Corporation, under the existing statutory framework, subject to regular budgetary oversight and review. Specifically, I ask the Congress to follow my budget recommendation by enacting a one-year extension of the Corporation's authorization and providing it \$45 million. Since interim funds for the Corporation are included in a continuing resolution currently before the Congress, there should be no interruption of the Corporation's activities.

RICHARD NIXON.

The WHITE HOUSE, June 30, 1972.

H.R. 13918

NINETY-SECOND CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AT THE SECOND SESSION, BEGUN AND HELD AT THE CITY OF WASHINGTON ON TUESDAY, THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF JANUARY, ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-TWO

## AN ACT

To provide for improved financing for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That this Act may be cited as the "Public Broadcasting Act of 1972".

SEC. 2. (a) Section 396(g) (2) of the Communications Act of 1934 is amended by striking out the period at the end of subparagraph (H) and inserting in lieu thereof "; and"; and by inserting after subparagraph (H) the following new subparagraph:

"(I) to encourage and assist the utilization and development of all forms of telecommunications facilities (including new technology) for the production and distribution of educational radio and television programs."

(b) Section 396(g) of such Act is amended by adding after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph: