Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA), the chairman.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Chairman, I would ask the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), does the Senate address what happens to the ''honey pot'' or do they just send it back to the Treasury? Because, apparently, they take out the money to administer the fund but do not address the problem.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I do not think they did anything. They just did not deal with the issue.

Mr. REGULA. If the gentleman would further yield, that is what I mean, they walked away from it.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DICKS. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. MILLER of California. Because, apparently, as they point out in the report, they anticipate this language, so they have taken a position. Rather than ratifying the practice, they will deal with it when they get to conference.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I think it is time to vote. We have had a very good and spirited debate.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote, and pending that, I make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

The Committee will rise informally.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NETHERCUTT) assumed the Chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Edwin Thomas, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

As evidenced by the prior vigorous debate, all of us come to the floor of the House with our own passions and concerns.

Let me first thank the chairman and the ranking member for being sensitive to some needs and concerns that I have that were debated at the time of the Johnson amendment on the National Endowment for the Arts but raised in a different context from the arguments that I will make today.

I am prepared and was prepared to offer two amendments, because I do believe that the National Endowment for the Arts should have been funded at its fullest level of $136 million, and today I was prepared to offer that amendment.

In fact, both the ranking member and the chairman realize that, in earlier years, the National Endowment for the Arts was funded up to at least $170 million and that was not enough. I also recognize and we recognize that the arts that are funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, despite the opponents, really do fund most of the nonprofit arts in this Nation.

The reason why I have come to the floor to express my concern that the debate around the Johnson amendment was more to keep or to bring back $98.5 million, of which I believe is not enough, is because it strikes home.

In Houston, Texas, the Alley Theater is an excellent representation of the value of the NEA and the arts in Texas. The Alley Theater is not a fabulously rich theater, and it represents a lot of our small theaters around the Nation. In fact, Houston represents the arts funding center, if you will, beyond the Mississippi, because that is the argument. Everything is East Coast or West Coast, and we stand up to represent middle America as someone who believes in the NEA.

The Alley Theater is a family-oriented theater with over 200,000 persons attending productions annually. To quote its director Paul Tetreault, the managing direction of the Alley Theater in Houston, ''the NEA has given meaningful support to the Alley and its audiences for many years.''

However, this year, Mr. Chairman, the Alley was denied funding for a production as a result of reduced budgets, and the director states that, ''It was a great surprise and disappointment to see that support interrupted at a time when the Alley is realizing great artistic achievements.''

The director goes on to say that, ''Many other deserving theaters, museums, dance and opera companies have been even more deeply affected by having their grant requests denied. Their losses, like that of the Alley's, will have a collateral effect on the quality of life in the communities they serve, to the detriment of arts, education, commerce, and tourism.''

Mr. Chairman, it is not only the Alley, but it is the Ensemble, it is the Mecca, it is many arts communities in our Nation and in our community.

Mr. Chairman, I was prepared to offer at this time an amendment that would have supported the NEA at $136 million.

Before I conclude, let me address the other amendment that I was prepared to offer. I would like to yield for a moment to the ranking member when I mention my other amendment that was to offer additional support up to $122 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities.

We can discuss a lot of things, and we have many interests, from the interests of our forests and our trees, to the protection of our fish and wildlife, and certainly to the protection of our native Americans and the responsible treatment of them. But the NEA deals with our educational systems.

Have my colleagues ever been to a library? Do they appreciate the culture of our Nation, the many different cultures? Have they ever visited the exhibition of The Many Realms of King Arthur at the local library? Have they ever read the diary of a 17th century New England midwife? That is the humanities. Do they watch an episode of the Civil War? Have they appreciated the history of slavery in America, philosophy, history, religion, art? That is about the humanities.

What we have done by funding it or underfunding it and not giving it the amount that the administration had is to deny our country with the ability to teach its children of its great history.

I do respect the chairman and I respect the ranking member, and let me just mention the fact very briefly that the chairman worked with me on the issue dealing with the Sojourner Truth Monument, and I am still working on that. But I do believe these are good amendments. It is my intent to withdraw these amendments, not without the frustration and concern that we are cheating our Nation's children, we are cheating our Nation's cultural arts, we are cheating our Nation's libraries.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) has expired.

(By unanimous consent, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas was allowed to proceed for 2 additional minutes.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS) to ask the question, recognizing the hard work, recognizing what we did with both the Democratic effort but as well the Johnson amendment, can we work together, recognizing the responsibilities that we have on this issue of funding for NEH and NEA?

Mr. DICKS. I appreciate the strong commitment of the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) to the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities.

And I do remember, I served on this committee now for 22 years under the leadership of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. YATES) a time when we did have better funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Arts, and frankly, I think the need is out in the country, in Texas, in Washington State, in Ohio, in Illinois, in Oregon. Everywhere in the country there are needs for these resources.

I hope, as we get back to a balanced Federal budget, which I think we will