



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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## **Senate Rules Committee Moves Up Smithsonian Oversight Hearing**

*Hearing now scheduled for April 11 at 10 a.m.*

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) Chairman of the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, today announced plans to move up an oversight hearing on the Smithsonian Institution to April 11.

The hearing had earlier been scheduled for April 18, but in the wake of ongoing disclosures about management and spending practices at the Smithsonian, Chairman Feinstein chose to schedule the hearing earlier.

**Date:** April 11, 2007

**Time:** 10:00 a.m.

**Location:** Senate Rules and Administration Hearing Room, 301 Russell Senate Office Building

### **Among those being invited to testify are:**

Smithsonian Secretary Lawrence Small,

Roger Sant, Chairman of the Regents' Executive Committee, and

Inspector General A. Sprightley Ryan.

The U.S. Senate Rules and Administration Committee has oversight responsibilities for the Smithsonian Institution. In addition to her position on this committee, Senator Feinstein is chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, which is responsible for Smithsonian public funding.

### **The following is a statement by Senator Feinstein:**

"Day after day, new reports emerge about problems at the Smithsonian Institution. As the new Chairman of both the Rules and Administration Committee and the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, I believe it is too important to our nation to let it continue down this troubled path without dramatic change. The hearing, now scheduled for April 11, will be the first in a series of hearings we expect to hold concerning these troubling developments.

The annual compensation for Lawrence Small, the Secretary of the Smithsonian, was most recently \$915,698, far more than the \$400,000 earned by the President. And over a six--year period, Secretary Small has received a housing allowance that has amounted to \$1.15 million, including imputed interest on a home he already owns outright.

A recent audit by the Smithsonian's Inspector General found that Secretary Small has logged almost \$90,000 in unauthorized expenses during his tenure. And what's also very troubling – once this was discovered – the Smithsonian's Board of Regents basically excused these expenses by retroactively revising their spending rules.

We need a new era of accountability at the Smithsonian. We will look closely at the compensation packages of the Smithsonian's Secretary and other top officials as well as their spending practices.

We will look closely at the Smithsonian's treatment of the Inspector General, whose offices were recently

exiled from downtown Washington, near the heart of the Smithsonian, to Crystal City, and has seen its resources diminished since the 1990s at a time when its work is even more important to this national treasure.

We will also look very closely at the Smithsonian's Business Ventures Division, where I have been told there are also very serious deficiencies in accounting and management practices – and salaries that are far above what one would expect from an institution so reliant on funds from American taxpayers.

The Smithsonian receives about \$715 million a year from the federal government – about 70 percent of its support.

Yet the Government Accountability Office has found significant damage to its buildings and some of its exhibits because of water damage. In fact, the GAO reports that \$2.3 billion is needed to fix and maintain the Institution's buildings and facilities.

Things have gotten so bad that one of the pre-eminent buildings on the Mall – the Arts and Industries Building – is now closed to the public, and the Smithsonian is considering possibly offering it to a private developer in exchange for its refurbishment.

In recent weeks, the Board of Regents has taken some meaningful steps forward, creating two new committees – one made up of Regents to examine its governance structure, and a second, comprised of outsiders to review the Board's work.

This is good news. But much more needs to be done.

I have been Chairman of Rules and Interior Appropriations for just over two months, and I am learning that one of the greater challenges will be the Smithsonian Institution. The Smithsonian is one of the premier institutions in the world, and I am committed to working with my colleagues to help ensure that it remains one of the great jewels of our nation."

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