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MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: Smithsonian Board of Regents Governance Committee's report
Da: Monday, June 18, 2007

Sen. Chuck Grassley, ranking member of the Committee on Finance, today made the following comment on the Smithsonian Board of Regents Governance Committee's report. Grassley is interested in ensuring that the Smithsonian Institution overcomes past leadership challenges and continues to succeed as the nation's premier museum and research complex.

"I need to look closely at the detailed recommendations, but my first impression is this is a good start. Self-criticism isn't easy, even if the criticism is constructive. I appreciate the board's recognition that business as usual is over, and that a new era is in order. The board appears to be taking a hard look at its own role and responsibilities and at ways to improve the Smithsonian's ethics and transparency. The recommendations to separate the positions of chancellor and chairman of the board, to prohibit top employees from sitting on for-profit companies' boards, and to have the Smithsonian abide by the Freedom of Information Act all stand out as very positive changes. I'll be interested to see how today's recommendations compare with those of the Independent Review Committee, and how the key details and decisions shape up over the coming months."