

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

UNITED STATES SENATE

ANNUAL OVERSIGHT HEARING OF THE SMITHSONIAN
INSTITUTION

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Washington, D.C.

ALDERSON COURT REPORTING
1111 14TH STREET NW
SUITE 1050
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005
(202) 289-2260
www.aldersonreporting.com

1 ANNUAL OVERSIGHT HEARING OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

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Thursdays, November 14, 2019

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U.S. Senate

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Committee on Rules and Administration

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Washington, D.C.

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9 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m.,

10 in Room 301, Russell Senate Office building, Hon. Roy

11 Blunt, chairman of the committee, presiding.

12 Present: Senators Blunt [presiding], Fischer, Capito,

13 Udall, and Cortez Masto.

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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BLUNT

2 The Chairman. The committee on Rules and
3 Administration will be called to order. Good morning. I
4 want to thank my colleagues for attending, and before I get
5 any further, thank Secretary Bunch for bringing some of
6 their great collection for us to look at. But Mr.
7 Secretary, we are glad to have you and several people from
8 your team here to back you up if you need it, but I am
9 confident you are going to be able to be the man at the
10 microphone there. This is your first official appearance
11 before the Senate Rules committee. We are grateful to have
12 you with us.

13 Secretary Bunch's appointment is historic in a number
14 of ways. He is the first African American Secretary to
15 lead the Smithsonian Institution, as well as the first
16 Museum Director who was later appointed Secretary in at
17 least 75 years. He is a historian, something that I really
18 enjoy, and he really understands so it is a great
19 combination of things. This is the fourth position that
20 Secretary Bunch has had at the Smithsonian, something I
21 don't believe any of your predecessors could claim.

22 In 1978, Secretary Bunch began his Smithsonian career
23 at the National Air and Space Museum as an Education
24 Specialist. Eleven years later, he joined the National
25 Museum of American History, and he most recently served as

1 the Founding Director of the National Museum of African
2 American History and Culture. And as the Founding
3 Director, he led an 11-year effort in constructing that
4 400,000 square foot museum and helping raise the matching
5 the public -- the private funds that matched public funds
6 and came up with the museum that tells an incredibly
7 powerful story of that part of our history and in fact of a
8 lot of our history.

9 Congress established the Smithsonian in 1846 through a
10 backrest by a British Scientist, James Smithson, who never
11 visited the United States, but he generously left his
12 estate to the United States Government to found, "an
13 establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge."
14 That ends the quote from Mr. Smithson's will. And now we
15 are almost 175 years later. The Smithsonian encompasses 19
16 museums and galleries, numerous research and educational
17 facilities, the National Zoo, a growing collection of 155
18 million objects and specimens.

19 Secretary Bunch's years of experience at the
20 Smithsonian truly do provide a unique perspective to look
21 at the future of the Smithsonian, and as the newly invested
22 Secretary who has inherited the responsibility for this
23 vast, unique, unmatched collection. Of courses the
24 Secretary also inherited the institution's challenges, the
25 aging facilities, a deferred maintenance backlog totaling

1 \$1 billion, and I am sure that is going to be one of the
2 topics we talk about today. In the last two decades, the
3 Smithsonian doubled the square footage while funding
4 remained essentially flat.

5 Now, under any circumstance, that is not going to
6 produce a very good result. And while doubling, the
7 institution added incredible capacity to see what Americans
8 count on the Smithsonian for. It also added a burden that
9 we haven't been willing to meet of maintenance, and I know
10 that is one of the things we want to talk to the Secretary
11 about today and one of the things that he sees is one of
12 his great responsibilities. When the Secretary started his
13 job, we were in the middle of a five-year strategic plan or
14 at least of implementing a five-year strategic plan created
15 by his predecessor, Dr. Skorton.

16 I want to discuss with the Secretary his thoughts on
17 that plan, his vision on how it needs to change as we look
18 now at the reality of many of the obligations and
19 opportunities that are out there before us. And so, Mr.
20 Secretary, we are glad you are here. I want to call on
21 today's Ranking Member, my good friend Senator Udall, for
22 any comments that you would like to make.

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1 STATEMENT OF SENATOR UDALL

2 Senator Udall. Thank you very much, Chairman Blunt,
3 and thank you for those nice words and introduction. Great
4 to be with you. You are a good friend and we have really
5 enjoyed looking at the display there, I think. I am very
6 pleased to be here this morning to discuss the Smithsonian
7 Institution and its programs, and to welcome its new
8 Secretary Lonnie Bunch before the committee for the first
9 time since his appointment. I am also proud to have the
10 chance to oversee the Institution as both a member of the
11 Rules committee here and as the Ranking Member of the
12 Senate Interior Appropriations subcommittee.

13 In both roles, I have worked to make sure Congress is
14 an active partner with the Smithsonian Institution and
15 provides the resources it needs to meet its obligations to
16 advance the civic, educational, scientific, and artistic
17 life of this Nation. And I can just say I am here
18 sometimes on weekends, and my wife and I go to many of your
19 museums and it is a marvelous display for Americans about
20 so many important issues in American life and issues around
21 the world. And I am proud that the Senate Interior
22 subcommittee has worked to advance an Appropriations bill
23 that provides more than \$1 billion. This also includes new
24 funding increases for security, facilities maintenance, and
25 \$1.7 million in new funding for the Latino Center.

1 I look forward to producing a final bill that will
2 give the Institution a strong budget Fiscal Year 2020. I
3 welcome the chance to talk about the opportunities and the
4 challenges of the -- and supporting the great work that the
5 Smithsonian is doing here this morning and having a
6 discussion about that. We all know that the Smithsonian
7 requires real investments to keep its existing museums
8 operating, to expand its collections, to tell the story of
9 all Americans, and to support the reach of its research and
10 educational programs across the country.

11 In particular, I expect we will hear this morning
12 about the importance of Congress committing the resources
13 needed to meet the Institution's maintenance and capital
14 needs. The capital requirements clearly need to be a
15 priority, but we will have the opportunity to talk about
16 the importance of Congress authorizing new museums to
17 celebrate the history, and Latino community museums that
18 would recognize and celebrate our Nation's diverse heritage
19 and whose authorization legislation enjoys broad bipartisan
20 support.

21 In my view, Congress should be able to do both things,
22 support existing infrastructure, and provide an exciting
23 opportunity for the Smithsonian to expand its footprint to
24 include these new museums. And I look forward to hearing
25 from the Secretary this morning as we talk about each of

1 these priorities. Thank you for being here and I would
2 yield back to the chairman.

3 The Chairman. Thank you, Senator. Secretary Bunch,
4 your written statement will be made part of the record, but
5 I would like for you to have a few minutes to talk about as
6 much of that or all of that as you want to.

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1 STATEMENT OF LONNIE G. BUNCH III, SECRETARY, SMITHSONIAN
2 INSTITUTION

3 Mr. Bunch. Thank you very much. Chairman Blunt,
4 Senator Udall, members of the committee, thank you for the
5 opportunity to testify today. As you mentioned, my tenure
6 as the 14th Secretary of the Smithsonian began just this
7 past summer. However, my relationship with the Smithsonian
8 spans many generations it seems to me. I am pleased and
9 humbled, however, to be the Secretary of this Institution
10 that I love so much.

11 The Smithsonian appreciates the on-going support of
12 Congress, the Administration, and the American people, and
13 we take seriously the role we play in advancing the civic,
14 educational, scientific, and artistic life of this Nation.
15 Our collections are vast, representing an incredible scope
16 and depth of artistic, historical, cultural, and scientific
17 achievement. We are an internationally respected
18 scientific and cultural Institution that does cutting-edge
19 research in many disciplines. Our 21 libraries
20 collectively form one of the world's great repositories of
21 knowledge.

22 We have an extensive array of educational material
23 that learners of all ages can access online, in classrooms,
24 and in our museums. The Smithsonian buildings host
25 millions of visitors every year. Our facilities provide

1 the foundation upon which we build our programs, our
2 exhibitions, our research, our scholarship. We have been
3 successful at maintaining building systems well beyond
4 their intended lives, like we have done at the National Air
5 and Space Museum. But the truth is, with a deferred
6 maintenance backlog of nearly \$1 billion, there is much
7 work to be done. All of our sites, the museums, the
8 research galleries, the Zoo, in addition to leased spaces,
9 we must care for 13.9 million square feet of buildings.
10 With a backlog of maintenance issues, we have been reacting
11 to problems instead of proactively maintaining assets. But
12 since becoming Secretary, I have looked at the backlog with
13 fresh eyes.

14 And in order to be strategic in our approach, I have
15 asked and directed the staff to begin analyzing projects in
16 a new way. Rather than simply seeing the totality of our
17 backlog, I want to analyze our maintenance projects
18 building by building, system by system. With this
19 approach, we are be better able to communicate our existing
20 priorities, develop a better sense of where our limited
21 Federal dollars are best spent, and find opportunities to
22 address maintenance needs as part of our capital
23 revitalization projects. I believe that addressing our
24 maintenance backlog is of paramount importance to the
25 future of the Institution.

1 In their wisdom, Congress and the Administration have
2 recognized the investment in long term care of our
3 facilities and have supported steady increases in our
4 maintenance budget. Many of our museums were built in
5 1960s through the 80s and they need revitalization.
6 Funding preventive care will result in reduced levels of
7 maintenance cost causing fewer breakdowns, save energy, and
8 decrease unplanned closures. The planning and design
9 funding requested in Fiscal Year 2020 will begin to address
10 the future of the Smithsonian Castle and the Arts and
11 Industries building. These projects represent the core
12 components of our 20-year plan for the South Mall, a series
13 of capital projects required after decades of deferred
14 maintenance.

15 In addition, our collection has grown, as you have
16 said, to over 155 million objects. These objects need to
17 be stored, maintained, cared for, and prepared for research
18 and exhibition. To most of our visitors, the collections
19 we have largely define the Institution. Therefore, our
20 collections are a vital national asset, and we are always
21 striving to improve storage conditions, striking a balance
22 between preserving the collections and providing access to
23 them. The spaces that house our collections are not immune
24 from deterioration.

25 The maintenance of these areas has been deferred to

1 the point of requiring capital investment. Our Collections
2 Space Framework Plan outlines a strategy for improving all
3 of our collections facilities. The Smithsonian's pressing
4 infrastructure needs, need and demand our immediate
5 attention. Despite our best efforts, much of our aging
6 infrastructure continues to be below acceptable standards.
7 We appreciate the support of Congress in addressing our
8 most visible project, the renovation of the National Air
9 and Space Museum. But just as important, we are grateful
10 for the on-going support of the day-to-day maintenance
11 needs for this Institution.

12 Finally, let me say a few words about my plans and
13 what I envision to do as Secretary of the Smithsonian.
14 Under my leadership, our goal is to reach at least 1
15 billion people worldwide. I envision a virtual initiative
16 leveraging state-of-the-art resources and innovative
17 partnerships, allowing domestically and internationally
18 audiences to experience our scholarship, our research, our
19 collections in new and exciting ways. If we are fully to
20 serve 21st Century audiences, we need to be more inclusive,
21 more accessible, and more diverse.

22 A critical part of making the museums more diverse is
23 to include traditionally under-represented stories,
24 specifically highlighting the stories of Asian Americans,
25 American women, Latino, and Asian Pacific Americans is

1 vital to fulfilling our goal. Under my leadership, we will
2 make diversity in our collections, in our archives, in our
3 exhibitions, in our workforce, a higher priority. As you
4 know, there are bills to establish a Latino American and
5 American Women's History museums pending before Congress.
6 If deemed in the public interest to move forward with these
7 proposals, it is important that any additions to the
8 Smithsonian are considered in light of our existing
9 priorities. A new museum would need funds for both the
10 creation and long-term operations of the facilities, the
11 care and preservation of our collections, and of course,
12 the on-going success of the museum. Our work also to
13 increase knowledge is never ending.

14 As we continue to make new discoveries, we plan to
15 share them with future generations. Therefore, I plan to
16 reimagine the Smithsonian's role in lifelong learning by
17 making the Institution a leader in K-12 education.
18 Finally, what I want is, I want people to see the
19 Smithsonian as a resource to help them better understand
20 their lives, their universe, their history and our shared
21 future. It is incumbent upon us to be a more universal
22 voice, one that earns the American people's trust in us and
23 leverages the great convening power to increase our
24 relevance and research. We want to be the place that
25 matters for all Americans.

1 Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify
2 before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you
3 may have.

4 [The prepared statement of Mr. Bunch follows:]

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1 The Chairman. Well, thank you Secretary. As I said
2 before, we are so delighted you are here and look forward
3 to the unique set of capacity and ability and understanding
4 you bring to the Smithsonian. You mentioned that Congress
5 had provided money for maintenance and I think you made it
6 generous in how you described that but looking at the
7 maintenance numbers in front of me, we don't seem to
8 increase that very much. We are sort of about the -- from
9 \$75.5 million to \$76 million the next year and then a
10 pretty good increase up to \$79 million in the year we just
11 completed.

12 We are hoping to get to \$85.5 million in this budget.
13 That is your request for this budget. We are not where we
14 ought to be with getting that Appropriations finished. But
15 clearly that is not doing the job. Let me just talk a
16 little bit about your sense that going through every
17 building, looking at the building systems, looking at
18 building by building requirements, how you think that will
19 help you prioritize? And am I right in believing that the
20 number you are working with in deferred maintenance is
21 right at \$1 billion now?

22 Mr. Bunch. Yes, our deferred maintenance is at \$1
23 billion. And I think that we have got really several
24 important ways to address this. One is there is always a
25 need to increase the amount of money we have for

1 maintenance. We do right now about 1 percent of what we --
2 that is what we spend but we really need to spend at least
3 2 to 3 percent to be able to not only stop the backlog but
4 to reduce it. But in the meantime what I realized is that
5 by being more systematic, we can not only understand where
6 the needs are, we can anticipate future needs, because our
7 goal is to have the knowledge and then to do several
8 things.

9 First of all, really utilize the fact that the key to
10 our success is to use both the maintenance budget and the
11 capital budgets to be able to do things like we have done
12 with the Air and Space Museum. By doing the renovation of
13 the Air and Space Museum, we were able to reduce and really
14 address over \$200 million of deferred maintenance at the
15 Air and Space Museum. So we want to look creatively about
16 how we bring together our capital projects needs with the
17 deferred maintenance. But also, I think one of the keys
18 that clear to me is that we need to spend our time, focus
19 our attention, on preventative maintenance.

20 I think we want to make sure that by looking more
21 systematically, we can anticipate what issues we may be
22 able to defer based on actually doing preventative
23 maintenance on that. So my hope is that we will continue
24 to grow our budgets. We are going to need your support to
25 do that. We are going to be much more systematic and

1 prioritize what we need to do. And then to really just
2 make sure that we are using every opportunity we can to
3 leverage the resources to address that backlog.

4 The Chairman. And I would assume, hearing you explain
5 that, that there are some places where addressing one
6 problem prevents the second problem from either occurring
7 or getting worse. An HVAC system that is not working can
8 create all kinds of other problems in the building. Is
9 that the kind of thing you are looking for?

10 Mr. Bunch. Exactly. If you look at for example, as
11 we think about what we need to do with the Castle and Arts
12 and Industries, if we can create a central utility system
13 that serves all that, it solves a lot of problems, it makes
14 it easier for us to maintain. So we are looking at how to
15 be more creative, how to really use the best technology to
16 come up with solutions to the problems we will face.

17 The Chairman. And am I right in the Castle and the
18 space there, the display, the space there -- because of the
19 HVA system, you are really not able to use that space for
20 what it was designed for?

21 Mr. Bunch. I think what we have to do with the Arts
22 and Industries building especially -- that is a building
23 that we spend a lot of money to stabilize. The exterior is
24 strong. The roof is good, but there is millions of dollars
25 that need to go into turning that into a space that is

1 usable for the public. While we for example use that space
2 for installation, we really are going to have to do new
3 systems.

4 We are going to have to fit out the spaces, so it
5 works for the general public. So in essence part of the
6 challenge of the master plan is to look at both the whole
7 notion of the Castle as well as the Arts and Industries,
8 and how we use those better to serve not just as office
9 space but serve our visitors and our public.

10 The Chairman. Great. I am sure we will have time for
11 a second round of questions and Senator Udall also is the
12 ranking member on the authorizing committee so you can get
13 a couple of double strokes in here today by talking about
14 the authorizing issues and not just looking at those as
15 appropriating issues. Senator Udall.

16 Senator Udall. You know, and we worked together on
17 the Appropriations committee. He is a cardinal. I am just
18 a cardinal in waiting. But Chairman Blunt, with your
19 permission, I would allow -- Senator Cortez Masto has
20 another hearing so I am going to allow her to proceed with
21 her questioning at this point.

22 Senator Cortez Masto. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman
23 and Ranking Member. I appreciate the opportunity.
24 Obviously, I have similar concerns about the maintenance
25 backlog. We want to do whatever we can to assist and give

1 you the resources you need to address that. I do want to
2 talk and ask a question about, you talked about there is
3 155 million objects? Is it a million?

4 Mr. Bunch. 155 million.

5 Senator Cortez Masto. Yes. And you talked a little
6 bit about how the storage -- it is necessary to have a plan
7 for that and you mentioned a collection space framework
8 plan. Can you talk a little bit more about that. Are
9 there challenges that you are facing there, and what we
10 should be aware of.

11 Mr. Bunch. As somebody who was a curator, as a
12 Director of a museum, I realized that the only thing that
13 is permanent in the Smithsonian are its collections.
14 Everything else is fleeting. And so it is crucially
15 important for us to preserve those collections but also
16 realize that we are going to have to continue to build
17 those collections as new stories are told, new research is
18 done.

19 So what we have looked at is creating this collections
20 framework document in 2015 was so important because it was
21 the first time that it gave us an accurate sense of exactly
22 what the conditions were in all those spaces, all the
23 buildings, what kind of equipment we had, and that has now
24 given us the strategic opportunity to really move
25 creatively to address this issue. Clearly it is a long-

1 term issue. It is going to be decades to do this. But
2 because of the support we have received, we have been able
3 to do some things I think are really important. We have
4 been able to look at the sites that were the worst or that
5 had great deterioration, that have decontaminations in the
6 Paul Garber Center.

7 We have been able to decontaminate all of those
8 artifacts, look at new ways to move them. With your
9 support, we have been able to build new spaces that can
10 hold artifacts both adults and at the Sutton campus. And
11 what that allows us to do is it allows us to address the
12 most serious problems, but also allows us to have the kind
13 of swing space that we need, as for example, when we now
14 move the Air and Space Museum, we have got to be able to
15 move artifacts away. And ultimately, that will give us the
16 kind of storage that we can use down the road.

17 Senator Cortez Masto. Thank you. And then you talked
18 a little bit about new opportunities here and I want to
19 take advantage of you being the Founding Director of the
20 Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History
21 and Culture because I am a big supporter of the National
22 Museum of the American Latino. And I guess my question to
23 you is, what opportunities do you foresee in establishing
24 the National Museum of the American Latinos that we can
25 start working on now to bring this to fruition?

1 Mr. Bunch. If there is one thing, I know how to do is
2 how to build a national museum. And the challenge for us
3 is to recognize that we are going to have to realize that
4 we are going to have to build the money, to build the
5 institution, to maintain it, to build the collections but
6 also to make sure that we are bringing resources into the
7 Smithsonian so that we can handle our deferred maintenance.
8 And I think that there are many issues to think about
9 issues.

10 If you are going to build a Latino Museum, how does
11 the money get allocated? When we built the African
12 American Museum, there was no mechanism to be sure when
13 Federal money would come and that made it hard to
14 strategize and plan. I think it is also crucially
15 important to realize that if we are going to build new
16 museums, it also has a major impact on the central services
17 of the Smithsonian, security, maintenance.

18 And so we have got to realize that there is going to
19 be resources put in those areas if we are going to be able
20 to do a museum that is worthy of the Smithsonian. With the
21 right resources and the right commitment, clearly, we can
22 do the museums that will make people proud.

23 Senator Cortez Masto. Thank you. And thank you
24 Secretary Bunch and to the staff of the Smithsonian. Thank
25 you for all of the good work. Really appreciate it.

1 Mr. Bunch. Thank you.

2 The Chairman. Mr. Secretary, on that topic, are you
3 suggesting if we were going to do another private, public
4 partnership that we can do a better job as you are raising
5 that money knowing what points you needed to make when
6 public money would then follow?

7 Mr. Bunch. Exactly. I think that even if there was a
8 mechanism that said it was a one-to-one match or that you
9 knew that at certain points along the construction process
10 that you could count on a certain amount of Federal money -
11 - what we had to do was every year obviously come back and
12 some years we did well on capital some years we didn't, and
13 that made it difficult to actually move the museum along as
14 quickly as I would. NMAAHC took us 11 years. That is
15 moving pretty quick in the Federal system, but in some
16 ways, I think that there are things I have learned that we
17 can shortcut that a little bit.

18 The Chairman. Thank you. Senator Capito.

19 Senator Capito. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you,
20 Secretary Bunch, for not just your service, for being here
21 today, and your long history in such an, I think,
22 distinguished field. Kind of along the lines as Senator
23 Cortez Masto, not on the Latino Museum, but we are at the
24 100th Anniversary of the ratification of the 19th
25 Amendment, giving the women the right to vote. And I

1 wanted to highlight efforts that we have made here, and you
2 mentioned this in your statement on the Smithsonian
3 American Women's History Museum Act, which I am a co-
4 sponsor.

5 Obviously, you have talked a little bit about building
6 a museum from the ground up. I wonder if you have -- and
7 you mentioned the perspectives in terms of the financing.
8 I don't know if you have any perspectives here on if this
9 act were to pass how that would come to fruition.

10 Mr. Bunch. I think there are a couple of things to
11 think about. First of all, it is so important that if we
12 do a museum on the history of American women, it is
13 important to recognize that while it is both a story of
14 individual women, it really a story that is a lens that
15 helps us understand what it means to be an American. So we
16 have to frame it in a broader way so that it is a story
17 that has shaped everyone. I think that what I am very
18 proud of is the fact that the Smithsonian has this American
19 women's history initiative, which is allowing us to do
20 important work that crosses throughout the Smithsonian.

21 It allows us to look at what are issues that could be
22 explored in a museum, how do you build collections, what
23 kind of staff do you need. So in a way, the American
24 Women's History Initiative is a commitment that the
25 Smithsonian makes regardless of what happens in the future

1 that we will make sure those stories are told in a way that
2 is meaningful and accessible.

3 Senator Capito. Thank you. I am very much an
4 interested in that. The other thing coming from a rural
5 State that is not too far away, West Virginia, the
6 Smithsonian's reach is broad into all 50 States and
7 probably globally as well. Could you talk a little bit
8 about what efforts the Smithsonian is making to make sure
9 that you don't have to come to Washington, D.C., although
10 that would be great, to enjoy the gifts that the
11 Smithsonian can give?

12 Mr. Bunch. I think you framed it in the exact right
13 way. The wonders of the Smithsonian deserve to be
14 something that touches every school and touches every
15 American home. And in order to do that, we have got to
16 build on the things we do traditionally even better. We
17 have to think about how do you create a virtual
18 Smithsonian? How do you take the collections, the
19 expertise of the Smithsonian so that people aren't coming
20 just to see the virtual Museum of American History or the
21 virtual Air and Space Museum, but the wonders of the
22 Smithsonian in ways that help them understand history, art,
23 science, but helps them understand broader issues like
24 identity and globalization and technology?

25 So what I am committed to doing is really looking at

1 how do we create that Smithsonian that is virtual. How do
2 we bring in partners from around the country so that
3 therefore we can have the reach because I think it is
4 important that the millions of people globally who want to
5 come to the Smithsonian should have that access. But the
6 other side of that is then to do even a better job with our
7 affiliates program, do a better job with our travel and
8 exhibition service to make sure we reach out in very direct
9 ways to communities small and large.

10 Senator Capito. Let me ask you this, we had Carla
11 Hayden, the Librarian of Congress, here last week I
12 believe, and a lot of what the direction that they are
13 moving is to digitization of their collection, all
14 collection. And you are talking about a virtual sort of
15 museum. Are you working with the Library of Congress?
16 Because there has got to be a lot of intersection there of
17 all kinds of not just history, but documentation is and
18 other things.

19 Mr. Bunch. We have started to work more effectively
20 with the Library of Congress. I have partnered with them
21 when I was Director of the museum, and I think tomorrow I
22 think the Librarian of Congress and the Archivist of the
23 United States and myself are sitting down to begin to look
24 at what are the things we can do in common.

25 Senator Capito. Right, because the National Archives

1 does have an exhibit on the ratification of the 19th
2 Amendment. That is very good. And I know they put a lot
3 of resources into that. And I am not going to ask you the
4 resource question because I know that is the big question.
5 You can do anything if you have enough time, money, and
6 resources. So I appreciate what you are doing with the
7 resources you have and thanks so much for being here today.

8 The Chairman. Senator Udall.

9 Senator Udall. Thank you, Chairman Blunt, for the
10 recognition. And welcome again. I am going to focus and
11 follow up a little bit on Senator Cortez Masto's question
12 on the Latino Museum. You know, Latinos have played an
13 important role in the history of our Nation for over 500
14 years. In my home state of New Mexico that history and
15 ongoing influence is celebrated. It is time for our
16 national institutions to also recognize and lift up the
17 important contributions made by Latinos and Latinas in our
18 country, our heritage, our history, our cultural tapestry.
19 Self-identified Hispanics and Latinos currently make up
20 nearly one-fifth of our population and represent the
21 largest ethnic group in the United States.

22 That is why I have co-sponsored Senator Menendez's
23 bill to establish the Smithsonian American Latino Museum.
24 And I also supported an amendment during floor
25 consideration of the Interior bill which would provide an

1 additional \$1.5 million for the Latino Center and expand
2 programming for existing museums.

3 If the final bill includes that increase, what do you
4 plan to do with the additional funding, and more broadly,
5 what steps are you taking to ensure that the Smithsonian is
6 including the Latino experience in all of its museums?

7 Senator Udall. One of the things I am proudest of is
8 when the fact that during my entire career at the
9 Smithsonian we have created the Latino Center. And what
10 that Latino Center has done is transformed the Smithsonian.
11 As you know, the real power in the Smithsonian is not
12 museum directors, or secretaries, or curators, it is people
13 who do the research and bring in the collections. And what
14 the Latino Center has allowed us to do is embed curators
15 who have that expertise in the museum of American History,
16 or the African American Museum, or the Art Museums.

17 So one, we want to build on that, and my sense is that
18 any support we get will allow us to continue to hire people
19 that will help the Center do its work. But also, as you
20 know, one of the things that is really important for us is
21 that the Latino Center is now following the pattern that we
22 did with the African American Museum, which was to create a
23 gallery in the Museum of American History that would allow
24 you to do exhibitions, allow you to hire staff, allow you
25 to build collections.

1 So I think any of the resources we have will also go
2 into that because I think it is really important for us to
3 be able to demonstrate in very concrete ways, here is a
4 space where that important story is always told.

5 Senator Udall. Thank you, Mr. Bunch. Obviously, I
6 hope that the work that the Latino Center is doing will now
7 lay the groundwork for the passage of the legislation to
8 create a new Latino Museum. I think it is critical that
9 Congress take action not just to support your existing
10 facilities needs but also to build this new museum.

11 When you and I last met, we talked about the
12 importance of you meeting with the Museum's advocates,
13 groups like The National Association of Latino Arts and
14 Culture, the National Council of La Raza, and the friends
15 group working in support of the museum creation and many
16 others. Have you had the opportunity to meet with these
17 groups and what are you hearing from them?

18 Mr. Bunch. I have had opportunities to talk to
19 individuals not collective groups. I am meeting with the
20 Congressional Hispanic Caucus very soon. What I am hearing
21 is one, a commitment for people to realize and recognize
22 that the Smithsonian cares about this subject and wants to
23 do even more, and there is a great deal of interest in
24 having me come talk to people about how do we build the
25 Latino American Museum? What are the steps? What are the

1 challenges?

2 So what I am hearing is great excitement. And I think
3 that what I want to make sure is that as we share that
4 excitement, we also make sure that we are doing very
5 concrete things that people can see today that lay a
6 foundation for the future.

7 Senator Udall. The Interior subcommittee bill funds
8 the Women's History Initiative at \$3.7 million. What is
9 the Smithsonian doing with its current resources to
10 celebrate and deepen the public's understanding of the
11 contributions of American women? How would the additional
12 \$1.7 million be used to expand that and prepare for a
13 permanent Museum?

14 Mr. Bunch. Again, much like the Latino Center, being
15 able to explore this history of American women really
16 allows us to build collections which are key to building a
17 new Museum. It also allows us to do exhibitions that cross
18 boundaries.

19 So I am very excited about -- we are about to do an
20 exhibition at the Museum of American History on girlhood,
21 which will really allow people to understand the lens
22 through sort of adolescence and women. It is really
23 important for us to say that I want to be sure that
24 curators throughout the Smithsonian have the guidance and
25 the resources to make sure that issues of gender are

1 explored in every of our museums.

2 Senator Udall. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

3 The Chairman. Thank you, Senator Udall. Secretary, I
4 think there have been 12 bills filed in this Congress for
5 looking at the potential for different museums or emphasis
6 in museums. Today you have mentioned an Asian Americans,
7 Asian Pacific Americans, Latino Americans, and a Women's
8 Museum, all has been part of this discussion. Assuming
9 those would happen, I think it is unreasonable to think
10 that all of them would happen or that any of them would be
11 in place within a decade -- maybe we learned enough from
12 the 11-year effort that if we got started, we would be done
13 10 years from now.

14 That is clearly too long to wait to tell all of those
15 stories as effectively as we can. Are you giving
16 consideration to more prominence of those stories and the
17 existing facilities, which of course would mean telling
18 less of other stories in the existing. So what would our
19 plan be on all of those areas for the coming decade no
20 matter what we decide to do in terms of a facility for one
21 or more of those other important components of who we are?

22 Mr. Bunch. My career has been about expanding the
23 cannon, making sure that we understand the rich diversity
24 of America not to explore just a particular community but
25 to help us understand who we are as Americans. I am

1 bringing that commitment to the rest of the Smithsonian.
2 It is my expectation that we will build on the work of the
3 Asian American Pacific Center that is really doing
4 important work helping us find new collections and new
5 stories.

6 I am thinking about how, as we create the virtual
7 Smithsonian, these issues should be at the heart so people
8 will be able to tap that virtual presence and understand
9 Latino issues, African-American issue, Asian American,
10 issues of gender. So we are not waiting on any museum to
11 be built. We are committed to making sure that the
12 Smithsonian represents America and gives all its visitors a
13 better understanding of who we are by looking at us through
14 different lenses.

15 The Chairman. You know, the Park Services, they now
16 entered the second century the Park Service and we are
17 getting very close to the beginning of the third century of
18 the Smithsonian. They are looking more at public, private
19 efforts. We got to watch this closely at the arch, which
20 after 60 years we needed a number of things done. It
21 became a huge local and individual donor effort, involves
22 some naming rights that had not been part of the Park
23 Service in the past, but it really produced a result that
24 we wouldn't have been able to produce otherwise.

25 Are you thinking about that potential? And I know

1 there are parts of the Smithsonian already that have had a
2 sponsor when they were built or an exhibit that has a
3 sponsor. Is there any capacity there for us to do some
4 fundraising that would allow maintenance in return for
5 recognition in parts of some of these facilities?

6 Mr. Bunch. There is always a great opportunity to
7 build and expand on the public-private partnership. The
8 truth of the matter is, it is very difficult for us to find
9 philanthropic support for some of the behind-the-scenes,
10 but I think the notion that the Smithsonian has done very
11 well in its fundraising over the last decade has really
12 been able to find new partners who have brought resources
13 to allow us to tell different stories and more important
14 stories.

15 So my goal is to continue to build that public-private
16 partnership to do the fundraising. But also where there
17 are opportunities. For example, we are looking at what can
18 be the philanthropic support for fixing the Castle and the
19 Arts and Industries. They are such historic buildings.
20 Maybe there is more philanthropic support we can get for
21 that. So we are looking in those directions to find funds
22 wherever we can.

23 The Chairman. Well, I was a University President for
24 four years once and nobody wants to give money for the
25 electrical system. On the other hand, if you get money for

1 the electrical system and part of the understanding is one
2 of the things you are going to do is you are going to
3 rewire the theater which currently has no patron, I just
4 think that is something we ought to be thinking about.

5 And when you do think about that, the public-private
6 partnership can't be we just have now with this private
7 partner a new source of revenue, but there does have to be
8 some collaborative discussion as to what that partner would
9 hope to have happen and our commitment to be part of it.
10 Just something to think about and I know, I am confident,
11 based on your past experience you are giving that some
12 thought.

13 And I am telling you, I think you would find support
14 for that and encouragement of that in the Congress if you
15 go in that direction. Senator Capito. Senator Udall.

16 Senator Udall. Thank you for the recognition, Mr.
17 Chairman. Secretary Bunch as Vice Chairman of the Senate
18 committee on Indian Affairs, I strongly support the tribes'
19 inherent right to exercise self-government which includes
20 their ability to protect and maintain tribal cultural
21 patrimony such as ceremonial and religious event
22 recordings. Many museums and universities, including the
23 Smithsonian, currently hold these recordings in their
24 collections.

25 Under current law, it is possible that those

1 culturally-sensitive recordings could be released to the
2 public domain which is a major concern for tribes across
3 the country. Last week, I brought this issue up with the
4 Librarian of Congress in a hearing before this committee
5 and was told that the Library is working with the
6 Smithsonian on tribal engagement. Can I get your
7 commitment to working with the Library of Congress and to
8 engaging with tribes on this important issue?

9 Mr. Bunch. Not only are we will work with the Library
10 of Congress, but we have already done a lot of work in this
11 particular area. One of the things we have done at the
12 Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage is created what
13 we call a shared stewardship collections policy, which
14 allows us to look at the native holdings that we have to
15 make sure that native communities shape our collections
16 policies, shape our access.

17 We actually communicate and consult with those
18 communities to make sure that we are not letting sacred
19 music or issues that shouldn't be in the broad public. And
20 so we are doing the best we can to ensure that we are
21 honoring the intangible heritage of the Native communities.
22 And I think that this is one of the most important things
23 we are doing because we will now take that shared
24 stewardship notion and really, I am going to ask the rest
25 of the Smithsonian to look at it, so we have a policy that

1 shapes the entire Smithsonian.

2 Senator Udall. Right. Thank you very much. That
3 covers my -- he was looking ahead, and he covered my other
4 question there with that answer. So I just would say in
5 summary that I am really a stand-in here for the Ranking
6 Member Senator Klobuchar and she is very, very proud, I
7 think, of this collection and the idea that the Prince
8 Guitar and the items from Minnesota are displayed here
9 today. And so we will -- and I know that the chairman is
10 also very proud of what is happening with Missouri. So,
11 thank you for bringing those today and really appreciate
12 it.

13 The Chairman. I think I had my mic on as we were
14 talking about the original Bundt pan also.

15 Senator Cortez Masto. I said, I think I have that
16 same pan.

17 [Laughter.]

18 The Chairman. We decided everybody has a Bundt pan
19 whether used or not. I have a couple of quick questions.
20 One is, the Senate Interior Appropriations bill that
21 Senator Udall is very familiar with included a provision
22 that would permit you to move forward with your proposal to
23 purchase a building to serve as a consolidated
24 administrative headquarters.

25 Does that language do what you need to do to get that

1 done? And as I recall, we have talked about that and there
2 is a foundation involvement too which might circle back to
3 my public, private partnership efforts. So how will that
4 work, and do you feel like the language that you see is
5 adequate for you to do what you would like to do there?

6 Mr. Bunch. I think the language is adequate. I will
7 sort of ask my staff to go back and make sure that there
8 aren't any issues that I don't know about. But I think
9 that it is crucial for us to be able to think in an
10 innovative way, maybe in an unorthodox way, to solve some
11 of the problems that we have.

12 And by consolidating all these leases we have, by
13 being able to use the Federal rent support to basically
14 help us pay down that debt, it will allow us ultimately to
15 save an awful lot of money for the Federal Government as we
16 move forward. And so we are very excited about doing that
17 and I really appreciate the language that you put in to
18 help us do that.

19 The Chairman. Alright, the last thing I will ask
20 would be in terms of the plan that Secretary Skorton had
21 worked on and you were a contributor that plan. Do you
22 feel like that plan is headed in the right direction? Are
23 there any modifications now that you have had time to look
24 at it that you think you may want to make?

25 Mr. Bunch. What I think is so powerful about that

1 plan is the notion of reach, relevance, and impact. So I
2 am taking those words and really making sure they are at
3 the heart of what I want to do. So by focusing on the
4 educational piece, by looking at the virtual Smithsonian,
5 but also by realizing that we can't be the institution for
6 the 21st Century we want if we don't fix some of the
7 problems that we have with our processes, HR, and
8 contracting alike. So for me, the framework of the
9 strategic plan is something that I will build on and I am
10 just tweaking it to focus on education and the virtual
11 Smithsonian.

12 The Chairman. Great. Any other comments from the
13 Senators here? Well, Secretary Bunch really thank you for
14 joining us this morning. We look forward to your
15 leadership at the Smithsonian. You come with a unique
16 background and unique gifts for this job and I hope we can
17 continue to be in constant communication about that. The
18 record will be open for one week from today.

19 [The information referred to follows:]

20 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 The Chairman. The committee is adjourned.

2 [Whereupon, at 10:45 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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