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MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: Smithsonian's independent review report
Da: Wednesday, June 20, 2007

Today the Smithsonian Institution released its independent review report of the Smithsonian Institution's management under the recently departed secretary. Sen. Chuck Grassley, ranking member of the Committee on Finance, has reviewed the Smithsonian's governance as part of a broad review to help make sure non-profit entities are well-run and preserved for public benefit. He made the following comment on today's report.

“This report confirms that the Smithsonian leadership had lost its way. The former secretary discounted the educational mission, took credit for fund-raising successes that others had achieved, and overstated fund-raising gains. He was awol much of the time. When questioned on his expenses, he reacted with arrogance and a sense of entitlement. The Smithsonian and the American people suffered in the meantime.

“All non-profit institutions should learn from this experience. The leadership crisis in the Smithsonian's executive suite shows what can happen when oversight, transparency, and good governance fall off track.

“The future looks brighter for the Smithsonian. I want to thank the board of regents and the independent review committee for this thorough report. They didn't pull punches and took their job seriously. This independent review buttresses the reform effort. The regents have started the hard work of shaking up the status quo. Members of Congress need to stay engaged and make sure we help the Smithsonian's renewal happen as soon as possible. We need to help the rank-and-file employees continue their dedicated work and build on the tremendous success of this institution. The Smithsonian reflects our nation's heritage and inspires national pride like few other places.”