



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0906

February 6, 2023

Lonnie G. Bunch III
Secretary
Smithsonian Institute
SI Building, Room 153, MRC 010
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012

Dear Secretary Bunch,

On January 20, 2023, thousands of Americans from across the country traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the March for Life, an annual march dedicated to promoting the beauty and dignity of every human life by working to end abortion—uniting, educating, and mobilizing pro-life people in the public square. For many participants the occasion was inviting, warm, and educational.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for a group of pro-life Americans from South Carolina. Following the march, students from a Catholic school in Greenville, South Carolina were allegedly harassed by Smithsonian Institute employees at the Air and Space Museum for their pro-life and human rights affirming apparel and were expelled from the building.

According to the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), “Once in the museum, [the students] were accosted several times and told they would be forced to leave unless they removed their pro-life hats. The group all wore the same blue hat that simply said, ‘Rosary PRO-LIFE.’ Other individuals in the museum were wearing hats of all kinds without issue” and “The museum staff mocked the students, called them expletives, and made comments that the museum was a ‘neutral zone’ where they could not express such statements.”¹

As Members of Congress, we are unaware of any laws, rules, or regulations prohibiting members of the public from wearing pro-life hats inside Smithsonian office buildings. Furthermore, there is a large body of jurisprudence reinforcing citizens’ First Amendment rights on public property.² As a federal entity and the recipient of more than \$1 billion in federal funds every year, there should be no debate as to whether the First Amendment applies to the Smithsonian. We are deeply concerned about this unjust expulsion of young Americans from museums—subsidized with taxpayer dollars—for wearing apparel that your staff disagreed with.

We request answers to the following questions by February 16, 2023. Please provide a separate response to each question below, rather than a narrative response.

¹ <https://aclj.org/pro-life/outrageous-in-profanity-laced-tirade-smithsonian-national-air-space-museum-berates-and-kicks-out-students-for-wearing-hats-with-pro-life-and-christian-messages>

² <https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution-conan/amendment-1/government-owned-property-early-doctrine>

1. Were you made aware of the alleged incident said to have occurred on January 20, 2023?
 - a. If so, when were you made aware of the incident?
2. Has the Smithsonian conducted any internal investigations into the allegations?
3. Please provide the names of the Smithsonian employees whose conduct is in question.
4. What disciplinary action has the Smithsonian taken regarding this incident?
 - a. If no action has been taken, please delineate the course of action the Smithsonian plans to take regarding this incident.
5. Does the Smithsonian have any policy prohibiting pro-life sentiments from being expressed in its buildings or any policy deeming it a “neutral zone?”
6. What efforts have you taken to ensure that the First Amendment rights of all Americans are respected at the Air and Space Museum and an incident like this never occurs again under your leadership?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

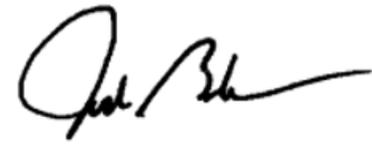
Sincerely,



Chip Roy
Member of Congress



Ted Cruz
U.S. Senator



Josh Brecheen
Member of Congress



Lindsey O. Graham
U.S. Senator



Ralph Norman
Member of Congress



Tim Scott
U.S. Senator



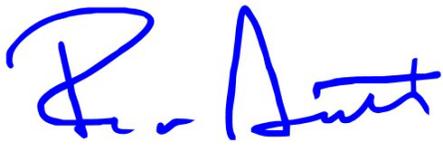
William R. Timmons, IV
Member of Congress



Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress



Russell Fry
Member of Congress



Rick Scott
U.S. Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith
U.S. Senator



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Mike Lee
U.S. Senator



Steve Daines
U.S. Senator



James Lankford
U.S. Senator



Roger Wicker
U.S. Senator



Mitt Romney
U.S. Senator



Keith Self
Member of Congress



Greg Steube
Member of Congress



Michael Cloud
Member of Congress



Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress

Mary Miller
Member of Congress

Marjorie Taylor Greene
Member of Congress

Dan Bishop
Member of Congress

Barry Moore
Member of Congress

Debbie Lesko
Member of Congress

Blaine Luetkemeyer
Member of Congress

Ronny Jackson
Member of Congress

Scott Perry
Member of Congress

Anna Paulina Luna
Member of Congress

Andy Ogles
Member of Congress

Chris Stewart
Member of Congress

Michael Guest
Member of Congress



John Rose
Member of Congress



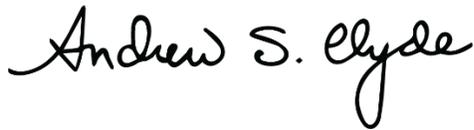
Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Mike Ezell
Member of Congress



Kelly Armstrong
Member of Congress



Andrew S. Clyde
Member of Congress



Warren Davidson
Member of Congress



David Rouzer
Member of Congress