

**Opening Statement**  
**Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson**  
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Research and Technology Subcommittee Hearing:  
*Scientific Research at the Smithsonian – More than a Museum*  
**January 14, 2014**

Good morning, I would like to thank the Chairman for holding today's hearing to explore the scientific research the Smithsonian is undertaking.

The Smithsonian was established from a bequest of more than \$500,000 from a British scientist who never set foot on American soil. While he never wrote about his motivation of giving the money to the US, some speculate that he was inspired by the United States' experiment with democracy, as well as his own philanthropic ideals. He gave this gift to found an institution for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." From that initial gift over 160 years ago, this country has continued to fund the Smithsonian which has become as much of a national treasure as any other monument on the National Mall.

It is easy to see how kids can be inspired to run home and look for fossils in their backyards or try to identify the constellations in the night sky after walking through the halls of any one of the Smithsonian's museums. We only have to look at the latest student assessment statistics to understand that our students are falling further behind their international counterparts in science and math. American competitiveness depends on our students' ability to meet the science and technology needs of the not so distant future. The Smithsonian's role in informal education is one that very much gives students a hands-on experience for those subjects they learn in their classrooms, enhancing their overall learning experience. Making STEM education a positive learning experience is very important, and making more STEM education programs accessible in communities that are underrepresented in the STEM career fields is essential for our nation's competitiveness.

I am eager to hear the status of the Smithsonian's role as the lead agency on informal education and outreach as outlined in the Administration's fiscal year 2014 proposed STEM education reorganization.

In addition to the Smithsonian's administration of STEM programs, it leads large-scale, worldwide research and curates and manages scientific collections used not only by Smithsonian scientists but also Federal agencies. I congratulate Dr. Clough and Dr. Pell on their work, and wish them well as they move on to future endeavors. I look forward to a smooth transition in leadership and continuation of the important research and education work done at the Smithsonian.

Again, I thank the witnesses for being here today and look forward to their testimony. I yield the balance of my time.