

**Making the Smithsonian Great Again**

**Testimony before**

**The Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency,  
The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**

United States House of Representatives

July 21, 2026

Mike Gonzalez

Angeles T. Arredondo Senior Fellow on E Pluribus Unum

Davis Institute for National Security & Foreign Policy

The Heritage Foundation

My name is Mike Gonzalez. I am the Angeles T. Arredondo Senior Fellow on E Pluribus Unum at The Heritage Foundation. The views I express in this testimony are my own and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation.

Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the capture of the Smithsonian Institution by individuals who are using it to subvert America from within. These leaders have commandeered an institution that the nation entrusted to them to ensure the transmission, and thus continuance of American culture and heritage, and have perversely turned it into its opposite, a hothouse for anti-American activism. These leaders often reveal, in their own words, that they see the world in terms of power dynamics—who has dominance and how to wrest it from them by dismantling the American narrative,<sup>1</sup> all deeply Marxist and Gramscian constructs. This committee’s focus on how these men and women have managed to take over a powerful institution comes at a propitious time, and one can only hope that Congress will wrest back control of the Smithsonian from the existing leadership.

This hearing is precipitated by a report issued on the Fourth of July by the White House’s Domestic Policy Council.<sup>2</sup> This report focuses on the National Museum of American History (NMAH), but in reality, it is the entire Smithsonian Institution that is under indictment. The report, 160 pages when one counts 31 pages with 522 endnotes, liberally quotes the words of the Smithsonian’s own leaders and staff. It is they who indict themselves by repeatedly telling us that they use the museum and even history itself as “tools of societal change” to “dismantle inherited narratives.” They tell us they will even use their vast educational programming to mold young minds into activism for societal change.<sup>3</sup>

The Smithsonian *is* a powerful institution. It is the world’s largest museum complex, comprising 21 museums if one counts two museums that have been authorized by Congress but not yet been built (and must never be built, as I will explain below), the National Museum of the American Latino and Smithsonian American Women’s History Museum. It also has nine research centers and several other libraries, archives and other facilities, plus the National Zoo. In 2025, the Smithsonian had 15 million visitors, a drop from the year before because of the prolonged government shutdown. The

NMAH was one of the most popular, with 1.8 million visitors, about the same as the Air and Space Museum and the National Zoo.<sup>4</sup>

But the Smithsonian reaches people, especially the young, in other ways. The Smithsonian's 2025 Impact Report informs us that that year 3.7 million students were reached directly through the Smithsonian Science Education Center's classroom curriculum; and that 8.6 million students were indirectly reached through teachers who participated in Smithsonian professional development programs and then brought materials to their classrooms, the types of programs that Orlando Serrano, Manager of the NMAH's Youth and Teacher Programs, often boast are used to enlist teachers to create "change." As the report says, "Across all Smithsonian education programs, there were 20.0 million participations in educational programs and 15.7 million educator-created publications distributed in FY2025."<sup>5</sup> The Congress appropriates \$1.1 billion a year for this institution, accounting for around 62 percent of its budget. The rest is made up through private donations.

Nine of the Smithsonian museums label themselves as "national," a term of some significance when it comes to museums. While the Library of Congress tells us that "there is no definition of a national museum,"<sup>6</sup> it is generally accepted that these institutions act as repositories of a nation's collective inheritance. National museums collect the nation's treasures and historical artifacts—national knowledge—and curate it in order to transmit it to future generations. The National Palace Museum in Taiwan is a prime example of what purposes a national museum serves. It has a permanent collection of 700 imperial artefacts and artworks, gems collected by emperors of different dynasties throughout the millennia, which the fleeing Kuomintang saved from communists taking over Mainland China in 1949 so Chinese posterity could know whence China came.<sup>7</sup> Spain's El Prado, which opened its doors in 1819, is another example of a national museum that takes its mission as a national repository of heritage seriously. It is one of Europe's most internally coherent national museums, encompassing painters from the European territories of the Spanish Monarchy—in Italy, the Netherlands, Flanders, etc.—at the height of Spanish splendor.<sup>8</sup>

The Smithsonian was supposed to be this. The Englishman James Smithson bequeathed his estate of nearly 105,000 gold sovereigns in 1838, more than half a million dollars at the time, "to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."<sup>9</sup> Historians believe he chose this ultimate destination for his fortune because of resentment toward Britain's rigid class system. As his biographer wrote, Smithson was part of a small elite in London at the time that admired America. "In America's unprecedented system of government, founded upon the rights of man, where each person was to be valued for his contribution rather than his pedigree, they saw the future—the most promising foundation for the pursuit of knowledge and the advancement of society," wrote Heather Ewing.<sup>10</sup> The National Museum of American History itself was created specifically, in the words of President Johnson at the opening ceremony in 1964, "to foster patriotism."<sup>11</sup>

Under present leadership, the Smithsonian has turned its back on all this. It rejects the national museum mission of preserving heritage and has joined forces with those who want to tear down the nation—it is now more of an anti-national museum; it seeks to create activists with a pre-selected bias, not to diffuse knowledge; it does not see America as promising, but more as a place of "national horror and pain," in Hartig's words,<sup>12</sup> and it does not seek to foster patriotism. The leaders of the Smithsonian don't only say they will use the institution as an instrument of change, they even

come right out and say that they see their work as challenging the concepts of citizenship and borders.

### **Joining the Ranks of the Home-Wreckers**

Since Lonnie Bunch III started to lead the Institution in 2019, he has made sure that it sided with two leading forces that were explicitly committed to reframing America's narrative, if not completely dismantling America from within: the New York Times' 1619 Project and the Black Lives Matter organization. In his very first year he signaled he was going to go the route of nation-wrecking by tying at the hip the Institution he had been entrusted with and the 1619 Project, which was open about the fact that its purpose was "to reframe the country's history, understanding 1619 as our true founding."<sup>13</sup> Bunch said he wanted to help legitimize the 1619 Project, and was happy that "everybody ... saw that the Smithsonian had fingerprints on it. ... I want the Smithsonian to legitimize important issues, whether it's 1619 or climate change."<sup>14</sup> He instructed one of his main curators, Mary Elliott to help curate the project and she co-authored one of its articles, "Most Americans Still Don't Know the Full Story of Slavery. This is the History You Didn't Learn in School." Except that historians from both sides of the spectrum have decried the shoddy scholarship and many inaccuracies of the 1619 Project. Bunch therefore didn't just tie the institution with an attempt to rewrite the country's narrative, but he also put at risk the Smithsonian's hard-earned reputation for scholarship.

But backing the 1619 Project's shoddy attempt to rewrite American history is one thing, backing BLM was quite another. Not only was this movement violent, organizing riots across the country from its inception in 2013. The leaders of the movement that then jelled into an organization were often clear about what they intended to do to the country's foundations. Along these lines, co-founder Alicia Garza told Maine Marxists in 2019, "we're talking about changing how we've organized this country.... We all have work to do to keep dismantling the organizing principle of this society."<sup>15</sup> That didn't stop Bunch in 2020 from sending specialists to collect the debris the rioters had declined to put in garbage bins and left behind to litter our streets, treating them as object d'art or historical artefacts. The new head of our main national museums embarked on a mission to record the trashing of America, both literally and figuratively, so he could transmit that to future generations, and forced our national institution to join an insurrection against that nation. Hartig, for herself, backed Bunch in his endeavor, promising to use the George Floyd tragedy to "work to reframe the traditional, celebratory narrative of U.S. history." Her aim? to force a "national reckoning." At one point, Bunch even gave BLM advice on how to become even more politically influential. Writing on July 2, 2020, at a peak point in the George Floyd riots and while the country was burning, Bunch saw a "moment of promise and possibility," adding this (in the magazine of the World Economic Forum no less),

"[F]or the moment to truly be transformative, this massive grassroots movement needs to morph into the kind of organization seen during the civil rights movement, when long-term goals and legislative strategies were paired with the fearless activism ... If this generation can put consistent pressure on the institutions necessary to reform wide swaths of society – the criminal justice system, housing, education and the economy – we could really see change that endures."<sup>16</sup>

## Transformative Change

Of course, under Bunch, Hartig and the other leaders, the Smithsonian doesn't just back violent movements that vow to dismantle America's organizing principles. More often, they take on the work of changing the hegemonic narrative of America, as they did with the 1619 Project for example, signaling that they have understood the works of Antonio Gramsci on how to do revolution by indoctrination rather than just street violence. The importance of Gramsci's work, which I have written about in several books, lies partly in helping Marxists gain the understanding that people will not revolt or try to change the system unless they are convinced through unstinting proselytizing that the system is rotten or at least works against them. But for this to happen, people who strive for this change must take over the commanding heights of the cultural institutions, such as the universities, entertainment, and the museums. Then they must appropriate these institutions to, in their words, "raise the consciousness" of the people. This is where all the leaders' words about societal change comes in.

And as the White House report makes clear, the NMAH leaders have organized their work to make sure that America's narrative—a narrative they blame the Smithsonian for helping create prior to their arrival and supposed liberation of the institution—up to this point gets an overhaul. The Museum has three plans that dictate how it runs itself within the overall mission statement that Hartig created when she became the museum's chief in 2019: the collections plan, the interpretive plan, and the decolonization plan. (According to the report, the words "American History" were removed from the mission statement to "get out of the 'America First' Mentality.>"). The three work in tandem to tear down the old narrative, which they see as laden with colonialism and white supremacy, and put in a new one. How this is part of a history museum's work, never mind one that bills itself as a "national" museum, is never explained by Hartig or the NMAH.

The Collection Plan states, for example, that NMAH "must document and understand instances in which collections were assembled in support of, justification for, or expression of colonialism and racism. Across the institution, we must collaborate to use the emerging framework of Restorative History and decolonization to address these injustices and their legacies of harm." As Director Hartig put it in 2021, "We're launching the Center for Restorative History...[to] address the harm that we've done as the Smithsonian."<sup>17</sup> The Center of Restorative History, a product of the Anticolonization Plan, is in itself proof that the leaders see life through the oppressor vs. oppressed paradigm that has been part of Marxism since Karl Marx himself put it in the first page of the Communist Manifesto. As the report puts it, "Rather than part of a national trust for the diffusion of knowledge, dedicated to explaining the 'infinite richness and complexity of American history,' the National Museum of American History has become an instrument—a 'prime tool,' as Director Hartig has put it—for a radical, activist cohort dedicated to reframing the American story to serve its ideological ends."<sup>18</sup>

But it is important to point out that Hartig and the other leaders give every indication that this shift has been intentional, not born out of the fact that they misunderstood their remit. The change in the museum's mission statement, and the reasoning Hartig gave, tells the whole story. The old mission statement read "*Through incomparable collections, rigorous research, and dynamic public outreach, we explore the infinite richness and complexity of American history. We help people understand the past in order to make sense of the present and shape a more humane future.*" The new one is shorn of "infinite richness," "America," and "history," and now reads, "*Empowering*

*people to create a just and compassionate future by exploring, preserving, and sharing the complexity of our past.*” Why? The White House report richly quotes Hartig as explaining to students in 2024 that it was “to get out of the ‘America First’ mentality.” She explained that this was “why we changed our mission when I first came.” Going into 2026, which was also, she noted, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11 and the fifth anniversary of January 6, she pondered what it meant “to show that full and rich complexity of the past. I think it’s a big challenge.” The word history had to go because she wanted to be “very future-facing.” As for getting rid of America, she said that the term “America” should really include “the entirety of the Americas, not just our part of North America.” Hartig, I remind you, is the director of the *National Museum of American History*. She has deconstructed all that, to use the terms of the post-modernist thinking that clearly guide her work.

### **Shortchanging the Founders**

We can understand now why, if we are going to get rid of America’s narrative and impose a new one, the NMAH must get rid of the Founders, or at least keep them in the shadows, and when it talks about them, to put remind everyone that some of them owned slaves and therefore are flawed characters. “One of the most significant findings in this report concerns what is missing,” reads the report. “A visitor to the Museum today will find no major exhibit dedicated to America’s Founding era, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, other Founding Fathers, the Continental Congress, the Pilgrims, the Puritans, or major moments of the American Revolution, such as Washington’s crossing of the Delaware.”

The Mayflower also has no major exhibit, even though the Mayflower Compact is seen by historians as the country’s first Constitution. When it does get talked about, in NMAH’s *Upending 1620: Where Do We Begin?* exhibit, it is to reframe the Christian Pilgrims as colonizers or as a “religious sect,” not as what they were, the nation’s “founders” and “settlers.” Thanksgiving, of course, is reframed as a “National Day of Mourning.” Columbus, an intrepid mariner who had to go from European court to European court to convince kings and queens to let him unite mankind, was decried by Smithsonian Under Secretary for Museums and Culture Kevin Gover in 2016 as a “slaver” and a “killer.” Gover advocated for replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

When the Founders do make a cameo at the NMAH, it is more often to tell their sins. The report explains that “visitors will find Founders, such as Benjamin Franklin, introduced chiefly through their connection to slavery while their decisive roles in building the Republic and their anti-slavery efforts are minimized or ignored.” The NMAH’s indictment of Franklin actually borders on the criminal. A wall didactic on an exhibit about him notes that his scientific accomplishments were “enabled by slavery.” It baselessly asks museum visitors to ponder whether Franklin’s scientific experiments, including those related to “electric shocks,” ever involved “an indentured servant or an enslaved person,” despite admitting that there is no evidence that they did. Visitors have to wait until the last paragraph to learn that “Franklin became president of the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery in 1787.” Alexander Hamilton, likewise, is described as a “flawed” individual. The museum fails to mention, however, that Hamilton was a vocal critic of slavery and helped found the anti-slavery New York Manumission Society in 1785, which worked to end the slave trade.

## Illegal Aliens and Sex

Instead of uplifting and inspiring museum-goers, the Smithsonian under present leadership not only misappropriates the museums that were entrusted to them to make Americans feel embarrassed and thirsting for change, but also to indoctrinate them, even the very young. The present leaders of the Smithsonian starts early, even at Kindergarten, in their mission to turn out activists who will challenge the concepts of citizenship, borders, and even sexual norms, by exposing them to instruments of sexual depravities.

Orlando Serrano, the Manager of the NMAH's Youth and Teacher Programs, is candid about this. In the aforementioned 2022 podcast, he explained how an educational plan called History Time that the museum shares with schools, targets students in pre-K through third grade. History Time, he said, "positions immigration and migration as not just a territorial border-crossing issue, but movement within the United States and the movement of boundaries. ... This month, our History Time episode focuses on the work of Dolores Huerta," he said. What else besides the socialist Huerta is Serrano using the museum to indoctrinate young minds with? Serrano explained that the museum hands out, "Black Lives Matter in School, which is a wonderful resource for, the kinds of curriculum we want to develop." He also bases material on the Golden Gulag by Ruth Wilson Gilmore, which uses a Marxist lens to tell children that prisons became a way for the state to manage the contradictions of capitalism, race, and class. And BLM at School is but one of the leftist educational resources that the NMAH pushes to schools. As the report points out, NMAH also partners with the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), recommending that high school teachers prepare to teach the Becoming US curriculum by exploring the website of SPLC's Teaching Tolerance program and using SPLC's Let's Talk guide. The SPLC, as we know, is now under investigation and federal criminal prosecution for paying to foment white supremacists violence on America's streets.

Also in the 2022 podcast, Patricia Arteaga, program coordinator at the NMAH's Center for Restorative History, said that we are now "witnessing another singular moment and movement such as this one in our history where the very nature of citizenship is being challenged, questioned, and at times completely rejected." She added that her work at the Smithsonian advocating for illegal aliens locates "the movement of boundaries over space and time."<sup>19</sup>

Arteaga was a leader in the Smithsonian's Undocumented Organizing Collective Initiative," (UOCI) which was launched to advocate on behalf of illegal aliens. The UOCI helped people illegally in our country in "mobilizing and influencing legislation and becoming their own political force in the 21st century." The NMAH went so far as to give illegal organizers also "ownership" of the project by giving them the opportunity to review the project and redact it. "In our research, we were recognizing that we are living in a very pivotal point, right?" added Arteaga, who was speaking as President Biden had opened the nation's borders, allowing anyone to come in. She compared the experience of illegal aliens to the "emancipation, women's suffrage, and also during civil rights."

As for sex, Serrano said that in his work with children in pre-K to third grade, "We've also talked about LGBTQ- LGBTQ+ matters, through particular objects in our collections." What objects might these be? According to the report, "NMAH places sexually suggestive material and other material inappropriate for young children in and around its Entertainment Nation exhibit, which is frequented by families and children, including video clips depicting drag queens and a magazine cover featuring a photo of nude young women. A separate exhibit featured a two-piece chrome and rubber crotch

harness designed for sadomasochism sexual activity, and another displayed the cover of a self-published magazine entitled ‘Girl Germs’ that shows two partially nude women embracing and discusses female masturbation and sexual experiences.”

## **What To Do?**

On November 9, 2024, right after the election, the very liberal commentator Thomas Frank published an op-ed in the New York Times titled, “The Elites Had It Coming.”<sup>20</sup> In it, Frank wrote about a recent epiphany he had had. “Everyone has a moment when he first realized that Donald Trump might well return, and here is mine,” wrote Frank. “It was back in March, during a visit to the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery, when I happened to read the explanatory text beside an old painting. This note described the westward advance of the United States in the 19th century as ‘settler colonialism.’ I read it, and I knew instantly where this nation was going.”

This museum didactic, Frank went on, “offered a glimpse of our poisoned class relations. Some curator at one of our most exalted institutions of public instruction had decided to use a currently fashionable, morally loaded academic keyword to address a visitor to the museum — say, a family from the Midwest, doing the round of national shrines — and teach them a lesson about American wickedness.”

I can quote to you from many other such writings. Writing also for the New York Times last year, Former Times editorial board member David Firestone, wrote approvingly, of a visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, that “it’s impossible to leave its magnificent building on the National Mall without feeling shamed and haunted.” Much of the museum’s collection, he added, “is a rebuke to the notion of American exceptionalism.” Other Smithsonian museums perform the same function, Firestone wrote. “The Portrait Gallery now has labels on many of its paintings of prominent early Americans that show how many people they enslaved.... And there is no harm in accepting that shame.”<sup>21</sup>

These lessons about American wickedness are too numerous to ignore, and the effect to make Americans feel ashamed of their supposed wickedness is intended. The Smithsonian’s present leadership has created this scandalous situation, and has thereby shown itself to be wholly inadequate to the task at hand. The museum world as it is presently constituted was already very liberal to begin with. In 2016, Verdant Labs conducted a study based on campaign contribution data from the Federal Election Commission.<sup>22</sup> It is contained in an interactive graph that analyzes the political affiliations of these professionals. Here’s a breakdown:

- Museum Directors: 89 Democrats for every 11 Republicans
- Museum Curators: 94 Democrats for every 6 Republicans
- Art Conservators: 100% Democrats
- Art Historians: 96 Democrats for every four Republicans
- Art Administrators: 96 Democrats for every four Republicans
- Art Advisors: 91 Democrats for every nine Republicans
- Archaeologists: 94 Democrats for every six Republicans
- Historians: 88 Democrats for every 12 Republicans

It is important to understand that leadership has taken this already biased profession and, instead of commanding them to overcome their biases, has on the contrary ordered these professionals to give their biases full artistic and professional expression, or else. This is done through the trainings and seminars that are the modern versions of Gramscian and Maoist struggle sessions and which are used to obtain the goals that Frank and Firestone observed.

One egregious example is recurring meetings that NMAH staff members had to attend starting at the year that Director Hartig took the helm, to read and discuss a “Museums as a Site for Social Action Toolkit,” also called a “MASS Action Toolkit.”<sup>23</sup> This 200+ page, three-year roadmap instructs the staff on how to “truly transform the museum space” that “privileges dominant Western ideals of race, class, and gender” and is linked “with white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, abuse of labor, colonization, imperialist theft of art and artifacts, destruction or absencing of alternative ways of interpreting or representing art and artifacts, structural racism and other oppressions.”

The discussion group surrounding the toolkit is bad enough, as it demonstrates the extent to which leadership trained the staff to use the Smithsonian as a tool for societal transformation. But its continued existence until 2023 also reveals how far the museum leadership will go to conceal this indoctrination, and that leadership will retreat only in the face of criticism, but then continue its divisive work surreptitiously. It just so happens that the toolkit is based on the work of DEI trainers Kenneth Jones, Judith Katz, and Tema Okun, whose chart on whiteness (“Aspects & Assumptions of Whiteness & White Culture in the United States”) so outraged the American people when the National Museum of African American History and Culture displayed it in 2020 that the museum leadership withdrew it and apologized. The Smithsonian said, *“We erred in including the chart. We have removed it, and we apologize. We are reviewing our policies to ensure that our digital materials reflect the quality you have come to expect. Education is core to our mission. We thank you for helping us to be better.”*<sup>24</sup> Yet, as we can see, the NMAH leadership continued to use the material secretly.

And the American people had every right to be outraged by the concepts included in the chart, and in the discussion toolkit. They both identify “13 facets of a culture based on white supremacy: perfectionism, sense of urgency, defensiveness, quantity over quality, worship of the written word, paternalism, either/or thinking, power hoarding, fear of open conflict, individualism, progress is bigger/more, objectivity, and the right to comfort.” As you can see, many of these are simply virtues that are requirements for success. The toolkit even quotes approvingly on the works on Repressive Tolerance by the Frankfurt School’s Critical Theorist Herbert Marcuse.

Enough of this. The country has had enough, and the Trump Administration has had enough. This Congress should also say enough. And for good reason. As Stanley Kurtz wrote last week, “You can say that the economy and foreign policy are more important than these cultural battles. Over the long haul, however, that’s simply not true.”<sup>25</sup> It is very obviously time to clean house at the Smithsonian and relieve the entire leadership of its charge. All of them. Lonnie Bunch III, Anthea Hartig, Kevin Gover, Orlando Serrano, Patricia Arteaga, all of them must leave. There is no hope of any reform if any of them remain at the helm. They will promise that the 603 Review Sessions will do the trick, they will promise, as they have done in the past, that they can conduct their own reviews and audits, they will repeat the words “rigorous scholarship” as if they were incantations, and they will wave their diplomas as if they were talismans. They will charge that those of us who say enough are trying to “whitewash history.” But I assure you that this isn’t the case. America, actually, has a wonderful



story to tell. The Founders inherited the scourge of slavery from the rest of the world, and devised a system that in the fullness of time got rid of it. In the end, it cost almost 700,000 lives, but we must not forget that Union soldiers marched singing the Battle Hymn of the Republic, which contained the words, “as He died to make men holy, let us die to make them free.” And, again, the system dealt with the scourge of Jim Crow and Segregation. America has a great story that nobody wants to whitewash, and it is the story of redemption.

So all the things the leadership and its supporters will say, as we can see with the whiteness discussion sessions, will be acts of dissimulation. All of it will be subterfuge. None of it is to be believed. We are faced with committed ideological zealots. You, Members of Congress, cannot micromanage their work. A new leadership must be appointed that can be trusted to implement objectivity and professionalism. But first you must clean house. If the Board of Regents cannot do its job, you should do yours. Relieve the entire leadership of its duties.

And that is for the leadership of the 19 existing museums. The two others, the National Museum of the American Latino and the American Women’s History Museum, were authorized in late 2020 when they were tucked into the Omnibus \$1 trillion bill which President Trump called a monstrosity, but which he and you were held hostage to and had to sign. These two museums can never be built. They have demonstrated, through their forerunning exhibitions, that they will be nothing more than incubators of grievances against the United States. De-authorize them and stop funding them.

Only a foolish people will pay \$1.1 billion for their own cultural erasure. The American people are not a foolish people.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Heritage Foundation is a public policy, research, and educational organization recognized as exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It is privately supported and receives no funds from any government at any level, nor does it perform any government or other contract work.

The Heritage Foundation is the most broadly supported think tank in the United States. During 2025, it had hundreds of thousands of individual, foundation, and corporate supporters representing every state in the U.S. Its 2025 operating income came from the following sources:

Individuals 79%

Foundations 14%

Corporations 1%

Program revenue and other income 6%

The top five corporate givers provided The Heritage Foundation with 1% of its 2025 income. The Heritage Foundation’s books are audited annually by the national accounting firm of RSM US, LLP.

Members of The Heritage Foundation staff testify as individuals discussing their own independent research. The views expressed are their own and do not reflect an institutional position of The

## Heritage Foundation or its board of trustees.

<sup>1</sup> Anthea Hartig at minute 1:21 in Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 1:20:34, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=4834>

<sup>2</sup> Saving America's Story, Report, The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/releases/2026/07/saving-american-story/>

<sup>3</sup> McGill, several instances, including Orlando Serrano at 1:00:00

<sup>4</sup> Smithsonian Visitor Stats. <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/about/stats>

<sup>5</sup> Smithsonian Education Impact Report. <https://www.si.edu/educators/smithsonian-education-impact-report-2025>

<sup>6</sup> National Museums: In Brief. Library of Congress. Report. January 11, 2024. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R45674>

<sup>7</sup> National Museums, ScienceDirect. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/national-museums>

<sup>8</sup> I wrote extensively on this issue in "How the Smithsonian Lost Its Way" Unherd, Jan 10, 2026.

<https://unherd.com/2026/01/how-the-smithsonian-lost-its-way/?edition=us>

<sup>9</sup> About Smithsonian Institution Smithsonian History. [https://www.smithsonianmag.com/about/about-the-institution/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/about/about-the-institution/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>10</sup> Heather Ewing, Why This Wealthy British Scientist Saw So Much Potential in the United States of America. Smithsonian Magazine. March 1, 2007. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-lost-world-of-james-smithson-148808127/>

<sup>11</sup> Saving America's Story. Executive Summary

<sup>12</sup> McGill

<sup>13</sup> The 1619 Project, the New York Times Magazine. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html>

<sup>14</sup> Ryan P. Smith, Lonnie Bunch Sizes Up His Past and Future at the Smithsonian, September 3, 2019. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/lonnie-bunch-sizes-his-past-and-future-smithsonian-180973198/>

<sup>15</sup> Dan Neuman, Black Lives Matter co-founder: Maine can be a leader in dismantling white nationalism The Beacon, June 28, 2019. <https://mainebeacon.com/black-lives-matter-co-founder-maine-can-be-a-leader-in-dismantling-white-nationalism/>

<sup>16</sup> Lonnie Bunch III, Have we finally reached a moment of promise and possibility on race? the World Economic Forum, July 2, 2020. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2020/07/racism-black-lives-matter-civil-rights-change/#:~:text=And%20now%20I%20have%20the,World%20Economic%20Forum%20Cultural%20Leader>

<sup>17</sup> Saving America. Pg 25

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. pg 5

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Frank, The Elites Had It Coming, Nov. 9, 2024. [https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/09/opinion/democrats-trump-elites-centrism.html?eafs\\_enabled=false](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/09/opinion/democrats-trump-elites-centrism.html?eafs_enabled=false)

<sup>21</sup> David Firestone, "Trump's Cultural Revolution Is Just Getting Started," August 8, 2025. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/08/opinion/smithsonian-trump-censorship.html>

<sup>22</sup> Verdant Labs, Democratic Vs. Republican Occupations. 2016.

[https://verdantlabs.com/politics\\_of\\_professions/index.html](https://verdantlabs.com/politics_of_professions/index.html)

<sup>23</sup> Toolkit-Final. [https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit\\_10\\_2017.pdf](https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Chacour Koop, "Smithsonian museum apologizes for saying hard work, rational thought is 'white culture'," July 17, 2020. Miami Herald <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/national/article244309587.html>

<sup>25</sup> Stanley Kurtz, The Smithsonian Leadership Must Go, National Review, July 10, 2026.

<https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/the-smithsonians-leadership-must-go/>