

**THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE
JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR
THE PERFORMING ARTS**

(110-74)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON

TRANSPORTATION AND

INFRASTRUCTURE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

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September 25, 2007

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER

TO: Members of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management

FROM: Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Staff

SUBJECT: Hearing on the Reauthorization of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

PURPOSE OF THE HEARING

The Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management will meet on Thursday, September 27, 2007, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2167 Rayburn House Office Building, to receive testimony on the reauthorization of Federal funding for operations, maintenance, and capital improvements for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts ("Kennedy Center").

BACKGROUND

History

The Kennedy Center was established by an Act of Congress in 1964, as a living memorial to the President John F. Kennedy. The concept of a Federally-chartered cultural center began in 1958 during the Eisenhower Administration, and was to be known as the National Cultural Center. Land was acquired at the current site for this purpose. The assassination of President Kennedy prompted Congress to change the designation of the cultural center in January of 1964. The Kennedy Center is the nation's busiest arts facility, presenting more than 3,000 performances last year and hosting millions of visitors. Located in the District of Columbia, the Kennedy Center provides educational programs for teachers and students from pre-Kindergarten through college across the United States.

Initial funding for the construction of the building came through gifts, donations, and contributions in the amount of approximately \$34.5 million. Federal funds were first appropriated in 1971. In total, Congress approved \$23 million in funds, and approved a government bond issue of \$20.4 million for the parking garage to be repaid from proceeds from the garage operations. The total construction cost of the building was approximately \$78 million. Due to its popularity, within the first year of operations, the Kennedy Center building exceeded its visitor capacity and was in need of serious maintenance and repairs. Congress appropriated \$1.5 million to the National Park Service (“NPS”) for the purpose of maintenance and repairs to the Center.

The upkeep needs of the Kennedy Center continued to grow, requiring additional funding for costs related to maintenance and repair, as well as capital improvements. Between 1972 and 1994, Congress appropriated \$65 million to fund major renovations to the building, including the replacement of the roof and the rebuilding of the parking garage. In 1991, Congress appropriated \$14 million to pay the accumulated debt for prior maintenance project costs not covered by previous appropriations. In sum, total Federal funding for the years 1971 to 1998, including construction funding, repayment of deficit funding, and interest forgiveness on the parking garage bonds, has totaled \$283 million.

In response to the continuing need for Federal funding, Congress enacted legislation in 1994 providing a five-year authorization of appropriations for repairs, maintenance, and capital improvements for the Kennedy Center. P.L. 103-279. In addition, this legislation authorized the Board of Trustees to contract directly for the maintenance and repair work to be performed. The legislation also relieved the NPS of its responsibility for the care and upkeep of the Center, as well as security duties, while permitting NPS employees to become permanent employees of the Kennedy Center. The NPS traditionally had the responsibility of maintaining the Center as a memorial, just as it maintains other national memorials. This arrangement was not working well, primarily due to the unique nature of the Kennedy Center as a center for performing arts.

Public Law 103-279 further required the preparation of a Comprehensive Building Plan for the Kennedy Center, which is updated annually. The initial comprehensive plan, submitted in 1995, identified approximately \$270 million in needed capital improvements over the next 25 years. The capital improvements authorized in the 1994 Act were identified as Stage I (1995-1998) of the comprehensive plan. Capital improvements identified as Stage II (1999-2009) improvements included renovations to the opera house; modification and improvements to the restaurants; reconfiguration of interior space; and improvements to the exterior building envelope. These projects were refined in plans submitted in 1996 and 1997.

In the 108th Congress, Congress authorized appropriations for repairs, maintenance, security, and capital improvements for the Kennedy Center for four years (FY 2004 through FY 2007). P.L. 108-410. In addition, this Act required the Government Accountability Office (“GAO”) to regularly review the capital program of the Kennedy Center to ensure effective project management. Moreover, the Act required improved project management of the Plaza Project, a project to connect the Kennedy Center to surrounding neighborhoods by bridging over adjacent highways. Public Law 108-410 established a project team for the Plaza Project. The project team is responsible for overseeing decisions relating to the Plaza Project that affect the scope, cost, schedule, or engineering feasibility of the project.

Capital Assets

The Kennedy Center contains approximately 1.5 million square feet of space, and houses eight theaters: the Concert Hall (2,700 seats); the Opera House (2,300 seats); the Eisenhower Theater (1,100 seats); the Terrace Theater (500 seats); Theater Lab (400 seats); Encore Cabaret (200 seats); the American Film Institute (200 seats); and the Millennium Stage. In addition, the building houses three restaurants; office, meeting, and rehearsal space; 23 elevators, six sets of escalators, and 2,000 doors; and five public halls or galleries; 133 restrooms; 108 crystal chandeliers; and 200 valuable paintings, sculptures, tapestries and textiles. The building is situated on 17 acres of land. The Center has parking for approximately 2,000 cars, which includes the parking expansion authorized pursuant to P.L.105-95, which expanded parking by approximately 800 spaces to accommodate the heavy demand for parking at the Center.

Current Funding Levels

The Kennedy Center receives Federal funding for operations, maintenance, and capital improvements through the annual appropriations process in the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The FY 2007 enacted funding levels for the Kennedy Center were \$17.6 million for operations and maintenance and \$12.8 million for construction, for a total of \$30.4 million. For FY 2008, the Administration's budget requests \$20 million for operations and \$19.4 million for construction, for a total of \$39.4 million. As a result of the FY 2007 Continuing Resolution, the Kennedy Center had to shift several projects within its Comprehensive Building Plan to future years to keep the Eisenhower Theater renovation on schedule.

PRIOR OVERSIGHT ACTIVITY

In the 105th Congress, P.L. 105-226 authorized the Board of Trustees to design and construct additions to the parking garage, to make site improvements and modifications, and to develop plans and projects to improve pedestrian and vehicle access to the Center.

In the 107th Congress, P.L. 107-224 authorized the Secretary of Transportation to carry out a project for construction of a plaza adjacent to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts ("Plaza Project"). The legislation authorized the construction of a plaza adjacent to the Kennedy Center; authorized necessary and related transportation improvements; granted authority for the transfer and receipt of certain property rights; clarified ownership of resulting property; authorized the construction of new buildings; and authorized \$400 million through FY 2010 to complete the Plaza Project.

In the 108th Congress, P.L. 108-410 authorized appropriations for repairs, maintenance, security, and capital improvements for the Kennedy Center for four years (FY 2004 through FY 2007).

In the 109th Congress, P.L. 109-306 authorized additional appropriations for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for fiscal year 2007. This law increased the Kennedy's Center FY 2007 authorization levels to make them consistent with the Administration's Budget request.

WITNESSES

Mr. Michael M. Kaiser
President
John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER REAUTHORIZATION

Thursday, September 27, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC
BUILDINGS, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:08 a.m., in Room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Eleanor Holmes Norton [Chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Norton, Cohen and Graves.

Ms. NORTON. I am pleased to extend a warm welcome to Michael Kaiser, President of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, a world-recognized preeminent performing arts institution and iconic landmark here in the District of Columbia, our Nation's Capital. Mr. Kaiser has presided over the Center's transformation both in architecture and in programming. The building's 1.5 million square feet on 17 acres has been upgraded, refigured, and transformed to more easily and graciously accommodate the Center's 2 million annual visitors and patrons.

Mr. Kaiser has given committed and personal attention not only to the Center's programmatic side, but also to the more mundane bricks and mortar that make up the Presidential memorial, which we must remember is what the Kennedy Center is.

Mr. Kaiser has not lost sight of the important symbolism of this building as a memorial to President John F. Kennedy, and we are grateful for his vigilance.

Today we will begin the process of reauthorizing appropriations for the Center for a period of 5 years. The appropriations will support the capital needs as well as the operations and maintenance of the building. Operation costs include utilities, fire protection and systems, ADA requirements, heating, ventilation, cooling and plumbing. Capital requirements are centered around renovation of the larger spaces, such as the Grand Foyer, the entire roof, and the reconfiguring of the plaza at the front of the building, something that we have long sought. Traffic flow and pedestrian access were improved by adding a grand staircase and a new vehicular circulation pattern.

We are pleased to hear from the president of the Center, and I especially want to hear how the Center is becoming more energy efficient, one of the priorities of our Subcommittee.

Mr. Kaiser, welcome.

Mr. KAISER. Thank you very much.

Ms. NORTON. I want to hear next from our Ranking Member, Mr. Graves.

Mr. GRAVES. Thank you, Madam Chairman, for holding today's hearing on the reauthorization of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Let me also thank our witness, Mr. Kaiser from the Kennedy Center, for being here today. We invited you here to talk about the current condition of the facilities and the future needs of the Kennedy Center.

The Kennedy Center has millions of visitors every year who come to enjoy the world-class performances in its theaters and public spaces. Maintaining a facility that welcomes visitors and performers has proven a difficult task, and today we seek to ensure the upkeep and modernization of the Kennedy Center.

The popularity of this institution has contributed to the wear and tear on the facilities. In the 36 years since the Kennedy Center first opened, it stores millions of visitors who have enjoyed performances in the nine theaters and various public spaces of the Center.

The authorization request submitted by the Kennedy Center includes plans to upgrade fire safety systems and stairwells, increase accessibility, and upgrade and maintain basic building features. Major projects also include the replacement of the Curtain Wall and panels of exterior marble that have been discolored or damaged. Renovations that would bring the Concert Hall up to standard for a national orchestra are also planned.

By maintaining the facility and proactively making repairs, the Center will be able to prevent major problems in the future. Long-term projects include the renovation of the theater lab and the terrace theater with improved accessibility, and update the theatrical systems. The Theater Lab will be made more useful and the infrastructure issues will be addressed. These two theaters would be updated towards the end of the 5-year authorization period.

While the Kennedy Center has had its fair share of construction management problems in the past, I am pleased to see that it has instituted a number of reforms recommended by this Committee and brought its more recent projects to completion on time and on budget.

So I look forward to this hearing. I look forward to hearing from our witness about the procedures in place to use public and private funds, for capital asset acquisition and maintenance, and to ensure the fiscal responsibility to maintain.

Thank you again, Madam Chair, for holding this hearing, and I look forward to it.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Graves.

Now we will hear from our witness, President Kaiser.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL M. KAISER, PRESIDENT, JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Mr. KAISER. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. It is a great pleasure to be here today, and I am grateful for the tremendous support of this Subcommittee over my 6-1/2 years as president of the Kennedy Center. Indeed the Kennedy Center has received several authorizations through your Subcommittee since 1995.

Over the last 12 years, the institution has made enormous progress in making necessary capital repairs to the entire memorial and improvement in its operations and maintenance.

Our current authorization bill expires on September 30, 2007 and the Center is asking the Subcommittee's consideration for a proposed 5-year reauthorization spanning fiscal years 2008 to 2012. I will describe the Center's plan for this time span shortly. But for the benefit of all Subcommittee Members, I would like to take a minute to describe briefly the breadth of the Center's activities and outreach across the country and across the world.

The Kennedy Center is both our national cultural center and a living memorial to President John F. Kennedy. I emphasize the word "living" since there is a vitality to the memorial and the institution that far exceeds anything that could have been envisioned when the Center was chartered by Congress in 1958 under President Dwight D. Eisenhower as the national cultural center.

Each year, the Kennedy Center reaches over 2 million people with more than 2,000 performances in all performing arts disciplines. Every season, our focus is on developing programming that achieves national and international acclaim as is befitting our role as a national cultural center.

But our performing arts activities are not limited to the Washington, D.C. Area. We are committed to touring productions to all 50 states to make them available to all Americans. The National Symphony Orchestra, a vital part of the Kennedy Center for 20 years, is fulfilling this mandate by expanding its national touring activities. The Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour program brings the best of family and children's theater to 107 cities in 31 States and serves over a quarter million people each year. The Center is committed to making arts accessible to everyone and presents free performances every day of the year on our Millennium stage. These performances are also available free to every American via live Internet broadcast.

The Kennedy Center also is committed to arts education and has created one of the most extensive arts education programs in the world. We have committed \$125 million over 5 years in this effort and serve 11 million people nationwide annually. We now train 25,000 teachers annually to bring the arts into the classroom at all levels. Our Distance Learning Initiative, which touches more than 1 million teachers and students each year, enables classrooms to experience world-class performances and to engage in discussions with artists at the Kennedy Center. Our Partners in Education program mentors relationships between arts organizations and their community school systems with 105 organization teams and school systems in 46 States and the District of Columbia.

The Kennedy Center also provides training to talented young Americans who aspire to careers in dance, music, conducting and set design. Our American College Theater Festival identifies the next generation of actors, designers and playwrights, with 20,000 students from over 900 colleges participating.

The Kennedy Center has instituted two programs which we hope will change the landscape of the arts in America. The Institute for Arts Management, which prepares arts managers for jobs running major institutions throughout the world, and the Capacity Building

Program for Culturally Specific Arts Organizations, which trains managers of African American, Latino, Asian American and Native American arts organizations. We have also instituted international arts management programs in Mexico, China, Pakistan and the 22 Arab nations.

The extensive programming and education activities that the Center presents and provides are supported through private contributions of almost \$50 million annually, not counting other government grants or endowment earnings which total an additional \$20 million each year. In addition, the Center earns approximately \$65 million each year from ticket sales, parking fees, food service, space rental and our gift shops.

In support of our artistic and educational programming, the Center takes seriously its responsibility to keep the building, a Federal asset, in the best condition possible. The Kennedy Center building consists of 1.5 million square feet of usable floor space on 17 acres of land. The building contains nine theaters, two public restaurant facilities, nine special event rooms, five public galleries, halls and foyers, and approximately 50,000 square feet of administrative offices.

Let me assure you that the Kennedy Center will continue to operate a safe, secure, and well-maintained building for all of its patrons and visitors and provide preventive maintenance as well as routine and emergency repairs and replacement of building systems. To this end, the Center received a Federal appropriation of approximately \$30 million this year. The direct Federal funding provided the Kennedy Center is used for both the operations and maintenance and for capital repair and restoration of the Presidential monument. Direct Federal funding may not be used for programming expenses. The operating and maintenance account is for the maintenance, repair, and security of the entire facility and grounds. This includes utilities, fire protection and sprinkler systems, elevators and handicap lift systems, and a myriad of electrical, mechanical, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, plumbing and sanitary water systems.

In addition to the maintenance and operation of these systems, this account also funds small renovations and the administration of 20,000 feet of offsite warehouse space. The security department provides 24-hour protection every day of the year, emergency response, key and access control, alarm system, monitoring, dignitary protection and crowd management.

In addition to these personnel services, the department maintains a variety of security and safety systems, such as electronic security, vehicular barriers and fire alarm and fire suppression systems.

The Center is always looking for opportunities to make the memorial more energy efficient. One example of our progress is the completion of an energy savings performance contract which has resulted in substantial energy savings. We believe this reauthorization proposal will accommodate anticipated cost escalation as well as critical minor repair projects and increases relating to employee salaries and benefits, utilities and contracted services, including security, housekeeping, and ground services and equipment maintenance.

nance. The Center's capital repair and restoration account addresses the larger renovations to the infrastructure of the memorial.

During the past 9 years, much has been accomplished. In 1997, the Center reopened its renovated state-of-the-art fully accessible Concert Hall. In 2003, the opera house was also completely renovated to address fire and life safety issues and accessibility. In 2006, we opened our new family theater that offers a completely modern accessible venue for youth and family productions. And currently the Eisenhower Theater is undergoing its first full renovation since it opened in 1971 with improvements to life safety, building systems and accessibility. The Grand Foyer has received a complete overhaul. The Center has installed a new fire alarm management system and public address system for the entire building.

Rehabilitation and modernization of the Center's elevators is in progress, with 10 completed to date. The Center conducted a comprehensive survey to identify all asbestos-containing materials in the building and has implemented an ongoing inspection and maintenance program, including substantial abatement activity. The entire roof and roof terrace were replaced and new safety railings were installed. Likewise, the marble deck on the plaza level was removed and replaced with new granite paving.

Perhaps our largest capital improvement has been to the site and grounds. The new circulation provides free-flow traffic movement to the garage, additional garage entrances and exits, and direct access to the Potomac Expressway from the Kennedy Center site.

Pedestrian access was improved by replacing the steep ramp with a monumental stairway and a fully accessible walkway. The site was also completely relandscaped and new lighting of the building and the grounds were installed. To heighten security, an electronic security system, including closed-circuit cameras, has been installed throughout the building and grounds. Vehicular bollards were installed at the entrance to the service tunnel. The entire key and access control system was upgraded. A new security operation Center was installed.

To prepare for this reauthorization proposal, the Center completed a full update of its comprehensive building plan with the latest information of the facility's condition and need for improvement. A team of architectural and engineering consultants surveyed the entire building and recommended upgrades based on the current needs and conditions, provided cost estimates and organized the improvements into a new implementation plan. This plan reflects the Center's continued priorities of access, of accessibility and life safety, as well as facility infrastructure.

The completion of life-safety efforts identified in previous plans, such as installation of sprinklers in the roof terrace level and the renovation of the Eisenhower Theater, take precedence in the near future.

Over the authorization period, the Center's capital repair implementation plan includes installation of sprinkler systems and replacement of fire doors on the roof terrace level, as well as minor architectural upgrades such as carpet replacement, wall and ceiling finishes and new lighting; renovation of miscellaneous toilet rooms throughout the building to address accessibility issues and to up-

date fixtures and finishes; improvements to exit stairwells, including upgrades to stair treads, handrails, lighting, signage, ventilation, finishes and doors, and upgrades to door hardware such as handles and openers to meet accessibility requirements.

In the longer term, as the life safety and accessibility work throughout the facility is completed, the focus will shift to facility infrastructure improvements. These projects will include replacement of the Curtain Walls, which involves replacing all of the large floor-to-ceiling windows and the gaskets in the Grand Foyer, Roof Terrace, Hall of States and Hall of Nations; repairs to the exterior marble where panels have become broken or discolored and joints have deteriorated; renovations to areas in the south block underneath the Concert Hall which were not addressed during the larger Concert Hall renovation. In addition, this project will address some environmental issues, instrument storage locations on the stage and in the upper levels of the auditorium. Significant work on aging mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems will also be instituted.

The Kennedy Center's building systems primarily include original equipment. And although maintained and serviced regularly to ensure proper function, these elements not previously in the theater renovation projects are reaching the end of normative service life and are showing signs of failure and deterioration. This reauthorization proposal will allow the Center to embark on a systematic rehabilitation campaign. Mechanical system upgrades will include repair, refurbishment or replacement of heating and cooling equipment such as boilers, air-handling units, humidifiers, pumps, valves and piping. Plumbing systems will also receive major upgrades. The electrical systems will receive a complete overhaul, including replacement of aging electrical wiring, panels and devices. The emergency power transfer switches will be replaced and safety and protective devices will be tested and upgraded as necessary. Upgrades also will be made to technical state systems, including various cyclical replacements, audio-visual systems and rigging components. These projects, though not obvious to the public, are critical to the continued safe and efficient operation of the Center.

Two additional projects affecting public spaces will be initiated toward the end of this 5-year period. The renovation of the Theater Lab and the Terrace Theater. The Theater Lab, a flexible black box theater space, will be renovated to create permanent walls, address sound transmission problems and upgrade finishes and building infrastructure. The Terrace Theater, over 30 years old, will receive improvements in accessibility, seating, finishes, patron circulation and building and theatrical system infrastructure.

Accessible seating is currently only available in the rear of the theater. While this is not a violation of accessibility laws, it does not conform with our standards of service to people with disabilities. It would be ideal to provide additional disperse seating.

I should note that project design will start during this 5-year period, but the bulk of the expense, including construction expense, will fall in 2013 and a subsequent authorization. These projects to be completed over the next 5 years and many other long-range projects and planning constitute an aggressive plan designed to

keep the Center operating in a way befitting a Presidential memorial.

Let me finish by expressing gratitude for this opportunity to update you on the many activities of the Kennedy Center. I thank the Subcommittee for its continued support of the Center and it is my hope that your Subcommittee and Congress will receive this proposal favorably.

I am pleased to answer any questions. Thank you very much.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Kaiser.

Before I proceed to questions, I should ask Mr. Kuhl if he has any opening statement to make.

Mr. KUHL. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I don't have any opening statement, but thank you for the opportunity. I was just curious if the Chairwoman was going to organize a Subcommittee trip to the Kennedy Center so we could review personally the proposed project.

Ms. NORTON. And do you have a performance in mind, Mr. Kuhl?

Mr. KUHL. No performances other than Mr. Kaiser.

Ms. NORTON. I am sure Mr. Kaiser would be pleased to do just that.

Mr. KAISER. We would be thrilled to invite all of you to the Center at an appropriate time for you.

Mr. KUHL. Great. Just contact your office.

Mr. KAISER. Absolutely.

Mr. KUHL. Okay. Thanks, Madam Chairman.

Ms. NORTON. Of course.

Mr. Kaiser, as you will recall, we had a hearing and had both you and the director of the Smithsonian here because we are looking at both the core differences—one is centrally funded by the Federal Government and, of course, the Kennedy Center is not. What is your annual fund raising goal?

Mr. KAISER. Our annual fundraising goal is approximately \$50 million. In addition, we raise about \$20 million from other government grants and from our endowment funding. So it is a total of \$70 million of unearned income.

Ms. NORTON. What is your own policy regarding board membership? Obviously you have a large board. Many of them are from the private sector, I am pleased to, report because that is where the money is, and therefore many of them are involved in businesses of all kinds.

How do you avoid some of the problems that the Smithsonian had, not so much with its board but with conflicts of interest?

Mr. KAISER. Well, as you know, Madam Chairman, our board is appointed both by the President of the United States and by the leadership of Congress. But we ask all of our board members to sign a conflict-of-interest statement. And on this conflict-of-interest statement, they have to reveal if they have any business dealings or other dealings or ownership of any of the major vendors who service the Kennedy Center. So far there has been absolutely no conflict of interest. But we do make, each year, each of our board members sign, and, I should say, also the senior staff.

Ms. NORTON. Do you have a recusal process in case something is—

Mr. KAISER. Yes. So far we have not had to use that recusal process, but we would obviously have to recuse any board member from any decision involving a vendor where there was a conflict of interest.

Ms. NORTON. Well, far from being critical of the way in which the Kennedy Center operates, my own view—and I have a bill that is going to be introduced shortly—is that the Smithsonian itself cannot operate differently from other major arts institutions with strong attachments to the private sector. That kind of attachment obligates people not only to sit on boards and smile, but to do what they can to bring resources to the institution. And that appears to be happening with the Kennedy Center. You have a large board, I understand. About 60 people or so.

Mr. KAISER. Correct.

Ms. NORTON. Is the size of the board related to the resource need of the Center, or why is the board so large?

Mr. KAISER. The board, I think, is large because there are 36 members appointed by the President and then there are 14 Members of Congress. And I think to maintain some level of balance, I think that was the reason why the board was created.

Ms. NORTON. Do you find that size a good size for the board?

Mr. KAISER. We find it very acceptable to us. To be frank, we work very hard to maintain a personal relationship with each member of the board and to make sure that each member of the board feels involved and can get involved in specific projects, rather than leaving all of the communication to happen at board meetings.

Ms. NORTON. How frequently has the Kennedy Center used the services of the IG for the Smithsonian of which you are a part, of course? For example, typically Federal agencies ask for opinions ahead of time with respect to large contracts to make sure that there are no issues that Congress would call them to account on or the like. Is that something that the Kennedy Center does?

Mr. KAISER. No. In fact, at one point in time, we were discussing using the IG for part of our audit process, our capital projects audit process. But the Smithsonian was not in a position to staff up that activity. And through discussions with the staff of this Subcommittee and with the Appropriations Subcommittee, we decided it was best for us to hire outside experts to audit our capital and our operations areas rather than to rely upon the Smithsonian IG. We simply could not work quickly enough through the IG's office.

Ms. NORTON. That is important information for us to have. And I certainly commend you for making sure that you were covered at least by outside auditors. The difficulty there is, of course, that there is no equivalent to the IG anywhere in the country and therefore Congress is dependent upon independent IGs. I just think the Committee will have to talk with other Subcommittees about how to make sure you have access if and when needed to those services. What is the naming policy of the Kennedy Center?

Mr. KAISER. The Kennedy Center is a Presidential memorial first and foremost, as you mentioned in your opening comments. Therefore, we do not have any naming of any spaces at the Kennedy Center, with one exception, and that is the Eisenhower Theater is named after President Eisenhower, since it was under his administration that the concept of a National Cultural Center was first ap-

proved by Congress. But no spaces in the Kennedy Center are named.

Ms. NORTON. So I take it that if someone approached you with a large amount of money—because naming—I don't blame people, they give a great deal of money—and said I want to name this or that part of the Kennedy Center, you would feel obligated to come to the Congress on that matter?

Mr. KAISER. We would feel obligated to say no, Madam Chairman. What we do is we direct our major donors, and we are fortunate to have major donors, to the underwriting of specific programs as opposed to the sponsorship of specific spaces at the Kennedy Center.

Ms. NORTON. And I do believe because it is a Presidential memorial, you will be able to find large donors who understand that there are other ways to let the public know that they have contributed, besides having their name imprinted on a Presidential memorial. That is hubris plus, I suppose.

Mr. KAISER. Yes. We are very grateful that we have been able to double our private fundraising over the last 6 years. So clearly there are enough opportunities for funders to find naming—in programming, as I said, rather than in spaces.

Ms. NORTON. Have you done that mostly with ticket sales, or how have you done it?

Mr. KAISER. No. That doubling is of pure private fundraising.

Ms. NORTON. Well, how have you done that?

Mr. KAISER. I could go through a long dissertation on how we do fundraising. It is a little bit like—

Ms. NORTON. How a fund-raiser do private fundraising without naming is of interest.

Mr. KAISER. Again, for larger donors, we focus on their supporting large individual programs. For example, we have individuals who sponsor our theater program or who sponsor our ballet program without asking them to name a space. These are annual grants rather than long-term capital grants.

And then we have been able to get endowment grants from people who, again, would like to take a long-term position of supporting some of our areas. For example, we have one major donor, the largest donor of the Center, has given us an endowment to pay for the music director's salary of the Kennedy Center, to endow that salary level. So we work very hard to find ways to meet the needs of our donors, but we do not name spaces and we will not.

Ms. NORTON. Do you share—are you pretty apart from the Smithsonian or what—

Mr. KAISER. We are separate—

Ms. NORTON. I know you are separate. I am trying to find what kind of cross-fertilization there is between you and the Smithsonian.

Mr. KAISER. There is much discussion amongst many of my staff members with many staff members of the Smithsonian at the programming level. Our general counsel speak together, our chief financial officers speak together. So there is a tremendous amount of sharing at the staff level of information, and in a variety of departments, and we call upon their advice and guidance many times.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Kaiser, I think that they need some sharing on your fundraising ability and how to do it in their own theater. They have a much larger set of cultural institutions to work with, and the Committee is very concerned that they have been constrained as a government institution is, but have not been nearly as creative in finding new funds.

I have some more questions, but I am going to turn to others first. First, of course, to the Ranking Member, Mr. Graves. Does any other Member of the Committee have a question? Yes, Mr. Cohen.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a—just kind of going through your statement here, which I appreciate, Mr. Kaiser. You mentioned in your statement that you are committed to touring productions in all 50 States, and that the Center Theater for Young Audience, Kennedy Center, goes to 107 cities and 31 States. Do you know if you have taken any programs to Tennessee, to Memphis or to Nashville?

Mr. KAISER. Absolutely. In fact we brought the National Symphony to Tennessee just 2 years ago.

Mr. COHEN. Where in Tennessee?

Mr. KAISER. I can get you a complete list. We did 150 different performances and lecture demonstrations and master classes—

Mr. COHEN. I am only interested in Tennessee. Really, in Memphis.

Mr. KAISER. In Tennessee—

Mr. COHEN. How about Memphis.

Mr. KAISER. I would have to get that information, sir. I am sorry I don't have that information with me. But I am happy to give you a complete report of everything we do in your State.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you. I would like to have that. And also I would like to have seen the Kennedy Center. Years ago I went to the Kennedy Center and went around some and was really awed by the beauty of it and magnificence. And then on Monday night, I went to the Magic 102.7 concert and Patti LaBelle was fantastic, and my friend Isaac Hayes was spectacular, and James Ingram was great. And we were in one of the halls there. I guess it was the—not the Opera Hall, but the concert—it was the Opera House. It was the smaller one to the left.

Mr. KAISER. That is the Concert Hall.

Mr. COHEN. We were in that one. I wanted to see the Opera House. I thought it would be kind of interesting to see it, and I walked down and I told the security guard I was a Member of Congress and I would like to see the Opera House. And he told me it was closed, I couldn't see it. So I didn't get a chance to see it.

There was a gentleman there named Major Harris and he was real nice. And he said, of course you can see it. But I went back in to watch Isaac's performance and then I went backstage to talk to Isaac. And then when I came out, Major Harris was off and the other security guard was on. And he was, like, the joke about I am the guy that controls the butter. Yeah. So it would have been nice to see the Kennedy Center.

Mr. KAISER. We would love to take you on a tour. I will take you personally if you will come with me. We do, of course, maintain a

great deal of security, as you can appreciate that security of the building is of paramount importance to us in this environment.

Mr. COHEN. I understand that. But I am—you know, I am not one of those guys that do bad things.

Mr. KAISER. I am sure that is true.

Mr. COHEN. Yeah. Thank you. Madam Chair asked about naming and you said—is there anything in your bylaws or charter about—or anything Congress has passed about naming theaters?

Mr. KAISER. You know, I honestly don't know if it is in anything Congress has passed. We just take it as given that we have no ability to name any space in the Center.

Mr. COHEN. Of course, the Congress has that ability.

Mr. KAISER. But we don't have an ability to take a private contribution and name a space to thank the donor for that contribution. We just take that as given and so it is just never considered.

Mr. COHEN. I think that is a wonderful policy because I think that would be gauche, to just be craven to money, which so many groups have to be. But a government group doesn't have to be craven to money, unless it be Congress.

Mr. KAISER. We appreciate that we are first and foremost a Presidential memorial, and we do not think it would be fitting for a Presidential memorial to be naming spaces.

Mr. COHEN. What do you think if the Presidential memorial named the—and let me see where I had it here—the American Film Institute building or one of the building—or the Theater Lab and named it in honor of Ronald Reagan? Wouldn't that be a good idea, one of the most famous actors ever—theater person, motion picture deal President who did a great job with all of those programs there honoring folks? I mean, when he honored people at the Kennedy Center, it was really something. The honorees knew him and they dug it, and I think they called him "Dutch" or whatever they called him, and they rode off into the sunset together. Wouldn't that be cool?

Mr. KAISER. I feel like that is not in my pay level. I would leave that to Congress to decide what they want to name at the Kennedy Center.

Mr. COHEN. That is something we should consider, a good bipartisan thing. And I may put it in. Which do you think would be the—I know it is above your pay level, but let us just—right now, which of those is more a theater that would be appropriate for Ronald Reagan.

Mr. KAISER. Again, I would hate to speculate in this hearing. I would prefer to leave that to my board.

Mr. COHEN. Well, you are speaking to your board. Yeah. Which would be more appropriate as a movie theater place where they show movies more likely, or film?

Mr. KAISER. In fact, the American Film Institute, which did have a theater at the Kennedy Center, they removed that theater and built their own facility in Silver Spring. That would be a great thing to name for Ronald Reagan.

Mr. COHEN. We are going to put that in and I hope that Madam Chair would join me in naming the American Film Institute Theater there for Ronald Reagan, and we could be bipartisan on that. And I think it would be most appropriate.

I don't think there was a President since John Kennedy that had such an appreciation for the arts, of film, of talents like that. I mean, certainly that was their crowd.

And then it might be appropriate to name something like the Opera House for Jacquelyn Kennedy Onassis. That wouldn't be something that you would think would be untowards in such a house. She was really the source of John Kennedy's appreciation for the arts.

Mr. KAISER. Absolutely.

Mr. COHEN. Behind every great man is what?

Mr. KAISER. A great woman.

Mr. COHEN. You got it. You got it. Your pay scale is higher than you think. Are you married?

Mr. KAISER. No, I am not, sir.

Mr. COHEN. Well, I thought that was a good answer. I thought your wife—I'm not married either, but that is a good husband answer. But we know it. But I think those are both things we could do. And I don't know if they should come out of this Committee, but certainly Ronald Reagan on the American Film Institute, and, at the same time, we might do the Opera House for Jacquelyn Kennedy. Jacquelyn Kennedy would be most appropriate to be remembered there. And I think there really should be a commissioning of a bust of her to be in the same building as John Kennedy. I think it would do a lot for the Kennedy Center, and I think when people think of the arts, they really think of Jacquelyn Kennedy.

And I will look forward to coming over and taking a tour. It would be nice to kill two birds with one stone because our time is valuable and I appreciate it. But really to be honest, it was not only security, it was kind of the attitude.

Mr. KAISER. Well, I apologize for that.

Mr. COHEN. You didn't know about it. It was not your fault. It was a private security guard. That is sometimes a problem you have when you do this rent-out stuff, this privatization scene. You get people that don't have respect for necessarily the institution and/or the authorizing entity that employs them indirectly, but only for their direct supervisor. And they don't have that institutional feeling. And if you get me the list of folks that you all do your—where you do things in Memphis and Tennessee, I would certainly appreciate it.

Mr. KAISER. We will be happy to do that, sir.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, Mr. Kaiser. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. NORTON. And just for the record, the history of naming of the Eisenhower Theater had nothing to do with—it was during a time when Democrats were in power. It was a great tribute to the President, but nobody was trying to do something political. The National Cultural Center had been formed under President Eisenhower and that was the first National Cultural Center. So it was felt by the Congress that it was appropriate to have a theater named for President Eisenhower.

I think the American people have respected the fact that this is a Presidential memorial and that this is a slain President, and that is all you have to say. And we just—I don't want to get into naming anything, frankly, because most things are named after people who are dead. I would rather just go forward and deal with the Ken-

nedy Center, which is very alive and bubbling I must say. And I have some questions about that.

I am about to introduce a bill, after a great deal of discussion with the National Park Service and the Smithsonian, to move the Mall toward being a living mall. This stretch of land out there, it is all I can call it; if it were in any other great city, some use would have been made of it; there would be little places where you could eat. Instead of a fast food place, particularly—because it is surrounded by cultural institutions, some of that culture would have been brought to the outside. I mean, there are all kinds of things that one can think of just because of where it is located.

Well, I am pleased to see that you have brought the Kennedy Center and its performances outside. They are important because it can seem a place that is foreboding. Maybe I can't afford to go there, maybe that is really for Presidential events or cultural events of that kind. It is very good that you have done that. I would like to see, for example, notions like something is coming. It may be a musical event to the Kennedy Center, it may be a play.

Here is Eleanor Holmes Norton talking off the top of her head. So I will have to talk to the grand master on this. Whether or not, for example, a short scene from a play, people were told is going to be out on the Mall. It takes 15 minutes and you will get a taste of a cultural institution—by the way, you might take some people who want to come who would not otherwise come, not to mention musical events. Even if a small number of people—I don't know why there aren't jazz quartets or string quartets out there at lunchtime so people can bring their own lunch. I wonder if you think—quite apart from the quite ambitious programs you have brought out on to the Mall, I wonder if you think that there is room to bring a taste of what is in the Kennedy Center out on the Mall were such a program to be initiated by the Smithsonian.

Mr. KAISER. Surely, I think that would be doable. From our experience working outdoors—and as you mentioned, we do a good deal outdoors now. In this environment, music works much more easily outside than the spoken word. So I would want to advise that one do musical events as opposed to plays. And what I would suggest that it be music that is of the louder variety rather than of the quieter variety, because you just don't hear it as well outdoors.

Ms. NORTON. Let me ask you about—I am also on the Homeland Security Committee, and everyone with respect to any institution in Washington has to perhaps think more deeply about that than if located elsewhere. Let me ask you specifics about how you would treat an event happening while something is in progress at the Smithsonian. Suppose you had notification of an event of some kind.

Mr. KAISER. Well, we have—

Ms. NORTON. That is related to terrorism. Maybe we don't know whether it is, but that is what we have, is notice of some kind of event and you have got people in the Kennedy Center, how would you—

Mr. KAISER. There are several answers to that. Firstly, all of our ushers are trained in emergency evacuation procedures so that we are experienced in evacuating the Center in the case of that need. We have an emergency response team of senior staff who are re-

sponsible, who are on essentially a network and responsible for handling emergency responses in given areas of the building. And then we have our security staff who manages all of this activity.

One of the reasons I mentioned that we put in a whole new loud speaker system, it gives us an ability throughout the building to talk to everyone in the building, which we didn't have prior to 9/11. So we have made great strides in the last 6 years in trying to address these very issues.

Ms. NORTON. I think it is a very difficult issue for someone in your position to even contemplate. I don't anticipate it. I know that when Tractor Man appeared, what we saw was a mass self-evacuation. And I don't think that we on Homeland Security, the District of Columbia, or national security officials have done enough to encourage people to stay in place.

I think that if anybody went running out of the Kennedy Center at a time when there was an event, that he would be in probably greater danger than if not. Now, it is hard for me to think of an event, other than the building coming down on fire, for example, or if it was an event that was citywide, where you would be in better shape trying to get out of your garage or trying simply to get out of your location. But I don't think that with all we know about evacuation, that is obviously the first thing that anyone focuses on, because the first thing you have got to think about is a fire in your own place. I am not sure, given the number of institutions all centered in downtown Washington, whether or not we have thought deeply enough about the immediate response to an event, whether that event is a bomb or some kind of a biological or nuclear event.

Mr. KAISER. If I could, Madam Chair, let me just add to my comments that the reason I talk about evacuation is that our biggest fear has to do with events taking place in our garage. As you know, our garage is underneath the building. So getting out of the building is a priority in a great many of the scenarios that one can draw. But I should say that we had completed a set of procedures for various types of incidents. So we have formal policies for various types of incidents, including a stay-in-place policy. So I don't want to say that all of our drills and all of our discussion has to do with leaving, but my biggest concern has to do with something that might happen underneath the facility.

Ms. NORTON. With respect to fire safety, if there were a fire or gases of some kind, I would have similar concerns about everybody rushing to their cars. How does one deal with some kind of electrical fire or other—or other event generated within the Center itself, since most people I guess have arrived by car.

Mr. KAISER. When we complete our life-safety program on the Roof Terrace, which we will do over the next 2 years, then the entire building will be sprinklered and will have a life-safety system in place so that we can deal with an event in one area versus another area.

Ms. NORTON. Now, the entire building is not sprinkled yet?

Mr. KAISER. We are embarking this coming fiscal year that starts Monday on the last piece, which is the Roof Terrace level. That would have been completed this coming year as opposed to initially this coming year, except for the continuing resolution that limited the capital funding available to us. So we will complete the Eisen-

hower life-safety project in the next 12 months and the Roof Terrace project in the next 24 months. And then we will be complete.

Ms. NORTON. This would be a matter of the first priority, I would hope.

Mr. KAISER. It is absolutely our first priority, which is why it is the first thing. Once the continuing resolution is over, we are right on it.

Ms. NORTON. I have one final question and that is the Kennedy Center one evening after—Washington is still in some ways the one-horse town it was when I decided after high school that I really had to see what the real world was like on the way to school. It was a small-time southern town, had no culture. Indeed what culture there was when I was a kid, was segregated. It was a segregated town. Of course, it didn't have any culture for the white folks either. It was a town that was without culture.

The fact is it has got fine restaurants, it has got a great deal of culture, its theater is first rate. However, after one goes to the theater—and I go to the—one of my favorite pastimes is going to a wonderful little theater here. Unlike New York, finding a place to eat is almost impossible. That is really a sign of a town that has not arrived. People, of course work hard in Washington, so most just go to, you know, and have a nice dinner ahead of time, and you do that in New York and some people do. But there are always a zillion places to go. It is a big city. It is a different city. There is a Roof Terrace—first of all, I didn't even—somebody had to tell me we think something—you can still get served there. I went and I could. And I found it was quite delightful. But I don't know how anybody would have known it was there. I didn't see it advertised even on the premises much for being open for dinner. I had no sense that they were used to receiving guests after the theater right there in the Kennedy Center.

I don't understand how it supports itself if it doesn't in fact tout its availability, particularly in a section of the city where there is no place else to eat. You have got to make me understand the thinking behind the restaurant that I found I went to like a blind woman following, the bread crumbs. You will find your way to a place to eat, even in the Kennedy Center.

Mr. KAISER. We do advertise on the screens in the Hall Of Nations and Hall of States about the availability. It is on our Web site and it is in all the mailings that we do, and our mailings go out to about 300,000 people. But what we have found—and it could be just inadequate advertising—but we have found that most people in Washington after a show ends at 10:00 at night or let's say at 10:30, they want to go home versus going out to eat.

Ms. NORTON. I implore you, Mr. Kaiser, to assume that there would be—you can't assume it unless—if it doesn't work, it doesn't work. And it was open. But the people who—and it is true that many people come from the suburbs and maybe they have to get home. But I can't believe that with 3 million people living here and in the suburbs, there would not be a clientele to go there. If there was something on the premises you could go to. You are already parked, you didn't have to go downtown and find yet another place to park.

Mr. KAISER. We will endeavor to do a better job of marketing the availability of the restaurant after performances.

Ms. NORTON. How late is that restaurant open?

Mr. KAISER. It is usually open until after the last curtain and then enough time for people to come up and order, and then whenever they complete their meal.

Ms. NORTON. I do want to tell you if, in fact, there is any notice as one comes to the Kennedy Center on either side where the theaters are located, I have never seen them. So I would only ask that there be better notice and maybe an easel that might say after dinner, try—

Mr. KAISER. We will do a better job.

Ms. NORTON. Is that supported entirely by—as every other restaurant would be?

Mr. KAISER. The restaurants are franchises. We have a franchiser who we have a contract with. And we receive a portion of their proceeds. They are actually responsible for their own marketing, although we do a great deal of marketing for them.

Ms. NORTON. If you have a *tete-a-tete*, given your own prowess at fundraising, with them about their marketing just a little better, there might be some of us who are starved because we work late. That is typical of people in the Federal Government, and it is an unmet clientele that—or potential clientele that is looking for food.

Mr. KAISER. I will work on it. I promise.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Graves? Thank you very much, Mr. Kaiser.

Mr. KAISER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[Whereupon, at 11:00 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

**Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public
Buildings and Emergency Management**

**Hearing on “Reauthorization of the John F. Kennedy Center
for the Performing Arts
Thursday, September 27, 2007**

Statement – Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04)

Thank you, Chairwoman Norton, for calling today’s hearing to discuss the reauthorization of our national cultural center, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

I am pleased to welcome Mr. Michael Kaiser, president of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, to today’s hearing. As president of the Kennedy Center, Mr. Kaiser is responsible for overseeing our nation’s premier cultural center. Each year, the Kennedy Center holds more than 2,000 performances with audience totals of nearly 2 million. An additional 1 million tourists visit the Kennedy Center outside of performances.

Over the past six and a half years as president, Mr. Kaiser has taken a number of steps to improve on the safety of the Kennedy Center for all visitors. These improvements include: upgrades to the fire-protection and sprinkler systems; installation of safety railings along the entire roof and roof terrace; and for the first time a public address system that can be heard throughout the entire building. I commend President Kaiser for his work to improve safety and look forward to hearing his proposed plans for future upgrades to the Kennedy Center.

Madam Chair, thank you again for holding this hearing today.

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Good morning Madam Chairwoman. I want to thank you for holding this hearing. Previous Congresses recognized that the Kennedy Center is a national treasure and acknowledged that fact by providing for its maintenance and upkeep. Under your able leadership, Madam Chairwoman, this Congress will continue to provide for the Kennedy Center while providing appropriate oversight to ensure that the taxpayers' money is used wisely, efficiently, and effectively

Madam Chairwoman, as you know, since its inception, the Kennedy Center has become a symbol of America's commitment to the performing arts. It has hosted some of the world's greatest performances. It has welcomed countless visitors. And it has even extended its influence into communities such as those in my district by sponsoring traveling performances and workshops

throughout the country. Of course, none of this comes without costs.

A 1995 Comprehensive Building Plan indicated the need for \$270 million in capital improvements over a 25-year timeframe. For FY2007, enacted funding levels for the Kennedy Center totaled \$30.4 million. And for FY2008, the president has requested \$39.4 million. These levels of financial commitment require us to provide appropriate oversight to ensure that the taxpayers' money is not squandered and that is why I thank you for holding this hearing today, Madam Chairwoman. I look forward to the testimony of Mr. Kaiser and I yield back my time.

OPENING STATEMENT OF REP. STEVE COHEN

Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management

“Hearing on the Reauthorization of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts”

September 27, 2007

I am pleased to be here today to receive testimony on the reauthorization of Federal funding for operations, maintenance and capital improvements for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The Kennedy Center was established by an Act of Congress in 1964, as a living memorial to arguably one of our nation’s most inspirational and renowned presidents, John F. Kennedy. The Kennedy Center is the nation’s busiest arts facility, presenting more than 3,000 performances in the past year and hosting millions of visitors.

Over the past decade, upkeep needs of the Kennedy Center have continued to grow, requiring additional funding for costs related to maintenance and repair as well as capital improvements. The FY2007 enacted funding levels for the Kennedy Center were \$17.6 million for operations and maintenance and \$12.8 million for construction for a total of \$30.4 million. For FY2008, the administration’s budget requests \$20 million for operations and \$19.4 million for construction, totaling \$39.4 million.

I look forward to hearing from the Kennedy Center’s sitting president, Michael M. Kaiser regarding the need for continued funding for repairs and operations for this major tourist attraction.

**Statement of
The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
Hearing on
“Reauthorization of the
John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts”
September 27, 2007**

I extend a warm welcome to Mr. Michael Kaiser, President of the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, a world-recognized, preeminent performing arts institution and iconic landmark here in the District of Columbia. Mr. Kaiser has presided over the Center's transformation, both in terms of architecture and programming.

The building's 1.5 million square feet on 17 acres have been upgraded, refigured, and transformed to more easily and graciously accommodate the Center's two million annual visitors and patrons. Mr. Kaiser is to be commended for giving his committed, personal attention, not only to the Center's programmatic side but also the more mundane "bricks and mortar" side that makes up the Presidential Memorial. He has not lost sight of the fact that first and foremost, this building is a memorial to President John F. Kennedy, and we are grateful for his watchfulness.

Today we will begin the process of authorizing appropriations for the Center for a period of five years. The appropriations will support the capital needs, as well as the operations and maintenance of the building. Operations costs include utilities, fire protection and systems, ADA requirements, heating, ventilation, cooling, and plumbing. Capital requirements are centered around renovation of the larger spaces, such as the Grand Foyer, the entire roof, and the reconfiguring of the plaza at the front of the building. Traffic flow and pedestrian access were improved by adding a grand stair case and a new vehicular circulation pattern.

I am eager to hear from the President of the Center, and I especially want to hear how the Center is becoming more energy efficient.

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**Statement of
The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Hearing on
“Reauthorization the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing
Arts”
September 27, 2007**

I am very pleased to welcome President Kaiser to today's hearing on the reauthorization of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

This Committee has a strong working relationship with the Kennedy Center, and I am pleased not only to be a great supporter of this fine institution, but also a member of the Board of Trustees. In this capacity, I know first hand of Mr. Kaiser's fine work and dedication. The Kennedy Center, which was established by an act of Congress in 1964 as a living memorial to President John F. Kennedy, is one of the world's preeminent cultural centers. The Kennedy Center is an impressive landmark in the Nation's capital. The building contains approximately 1.5 million square feet of space, and houses nine theaters; three restaurants; and office, meeting, and rehearsal space.

The Kennedy Center is more than a physical memorial. It also acts as a living Presidential memorial for performance arts programming and education. The Kennedy Center reaches more than two million people each year through 2,000 arts performances in Washington, D.C. and through television, radio, and Internet broadcasts. The Center's activities reach beyond the District of Columbia and to all 50 states. The Center provides educational programs for teachers and students from pre-Kindergarten through college across the United States.

In 1994, Congress enacted legislation providing a five-year authorization of appropriations for repairs, maintenance, and capital improvements for the Kennedy Center (P.L. 103-279). Since that time, the Committee has considered, and Congress has passed, four additional bills to authorize operations, maintenance, and capital improvements for the Kennedy Center. Many modifications and enhancements have been made to both the interior and exterior of the building, as well as the grounds of the Center in the past 12 years.

However, as President Kaiser will outline in his testimony, more work is needed to maintain and upgrade this memorial. The Committee will consider these needs as we move legislation to reauthorize Federal funding for the Kennedy Center, to ensure that this institution continues to provide a great cultural service to our Nation.

I look forward to President Kaiser's testimony this morning.

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Statement of Michael M. Kaiser
President, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
**Before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings
and Emergency Management
September 27, 2007**

Good morning, my name is Michael Kaiser and I have the honor of serving as the President of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. I am grateful for the tremendous support of this subcommittee over my six and a half years in this position.

Indeed, the Kennedy Center has received several authorizations through your subcommittee since 1995. Over the last 12 years, the institution has made enormous progress in making necessary capital repairs to the entire memorial and improvements in its operations and maintenance. Our current authorization bill (Public Law 108-410) expires on September 30, 2007, and the Center is asking for the subcommittee's consideration of a proposed five-year re-authorization spanning fiscal years 2008-2012. I will describe the Center's plan for this time span shortly. For the benefit of all subcommittee members, I would like to take a minute to describe briefly the breadth of the Center's activities and outreach across the country and around the world.

The Kennedy Center is both our national cultural center and a living memorial to President John F. Kennedy. I emphasize the word "living" since there is a vitality to the memorial and the institution that far exceeds anything that could have been envisioned when the Center was chartered by Congress in 1958 under President Dwight D. Eisenhower as the national cultural center.

Each year, the Kennedy Center reaches over two million people with more than 2,000 performances in all performing arts disciplines. Every season, our focus is on developing programming that achieves national and international acclaim as is befitting our role as the national cultural center. But our performing arts activities are not limited to the Washington D.C. area. We are committed to touring productions to all 50 states to make them available to all Americans.

The National Symphony Orchestra, a vital part of the Kennedy Center for 20 years, is fulfilling this mandate by expanding its national touring activities. The Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour program brings the best of family and children's theater to 107 cities in 31 states and serves over a quarter million people.

The Center is committed to making arts accessible to everyone and presents free performances every day of the year on its Millennium Stage. These performances are also available free to every American via live Internet broadcasts.

The Kennedy Center is also committed to arts education and has created one of the most extensive arts education programs in the world spending \$125 million over five years on this effort and serving 11 million people nationwide. We now train 25,000 teachers annually to bring the arts into the classroom at all levels. Our distance learning initiative, which touches more than one million teachers and students, enables classrooms to experience world-class performances and to engage in discussions with artists at the Kennedy Center. Our Partners in Education Program mentors relationships between arts organizations and their community school systems with 105 organization teams in school systems in 46 states, including the District of Columbia.

The Kennedy Center also provides training to talented young Americans who aspire to careers in dance, music, conducting and set design. Our American College Theater Festival identifies the next generation of actors, designers and playwrights with 20,000 students from over 900 colleges participating. The Kennedy Center has instituted two programs which we hope will change the landscape of the arts in America: The Institute for Arts Management, which prepares arts managers for jobs running major institutions throughout the world, and the Capacity Building Program for Culturally Specific Arts Organizations, which trains managers of African-American, Latino, Asian-American and Native American arts organizations. We have also instituted international arts management programs in Mexico, China, Pakistan and the 22 Arab nations.

The extensive programming and education activities that the Center presents and provides are supported through private contributions of almost \$50 million annually, not counting other government grants or endowment earnings, which total an additional \$20 million each year. In addition, the Center earns approximately \$65 million each year from ticket sales, parking fees, food service, space rental and our gift shops.

In support of our artistic and educational programming, the Center takes seriously its responsibility to keep the building, a Federal asset, in the best condition possible. The Kennedy Center building consists of 1.5 million square feet of usable floor space, on 17 acres of land. The building contains nine theaters, two public restaurant facilities, nine special event rooms, five public galleries, halls, and foyers, and approximately 50,000 square feet of administrative offices. Let me assure you that the Kennedy Center will continue to operate a safe, secure and well-maintained building for all of its patrons and visitors and provide preventative maintenance as well as routine and emergency repairs and replacement of building systems.

To this end the Center, a Presidential memorial, received a federal appropriation of approximately \$30 million this year. The direct federal funding provided to the Kennedy Center is used for both the Operations and Maintenance and for Capital Repair and Restoration of the presidential monument. Direct federal funding may not be used for programming expenses.

The Operations and Maintenance account is for the maintenance, repair, and security of the entire facility and grounds. This includes utilities, fire-protection and sprinkler systems, elevators and handicapped lift systems, and a myriad of electrical,

mechanical, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, plumbing, and sanitary water systems. In addition to the maintenance and operation of these systems, this account also funds small renovations, and the administration of 20,000 feet of off-site warehouse space. The security department provides 24-hour protection every day of the year, emergency response, key and access control, alarm system monitoring, dignitary protection and crowd management. In addition to these personnel services, the department maintains a variety of security and safety systems such as electronic security, vehicular barriers and fire alarm and fire suppression systems.

We believe this re-authorization proposal will accommodate anticipated cost escalation as well as critical minor repair projects and increases relating to employee salaries and benefits, utilities and contracted services including security, housekeeping and ground services, and equipment maintenance.

The Center's Capital Repair and Restoration account addresses the larger renovations to the infrastructure of the memorial. During the past nine years, much has been accomplished.

In 1997, the Center re-opened its renovated state-of-the-art, fully accessible Concert Hall. In 2003, the Opera House was also completely renovated to address fire and life safety issues and accessibility. In 2006, we opened our new Family Theater that offers a completely modern, accessible venue for youth and family productions. And, currently, the Eisenhower Theater is undergoing its first full renovation since it opened in 1971, with improvements to life safety, building systems and accessibility.

The Grand Foyer has received a complete overhaul. The Center has installed a new fire alarm management system and public address system for the entire building. Rehabilitation and modernization of the Center's elevators is in process with ten completed to-date. The Center conducted a comprehensive survey to identify all asbestos-containing materials in the building and has implemented an on-going inspection and maintenance program including substantial abatement activity.

The entire roof and roof terrace were replaced and new safety railings were installed. Likewise, the marble deck on the plaza level was removed and replaced with new granite decking.

Perhaps our largest capital improvement has been to the site and grounds. The new circulation provides free flow traffic movement to the garage, additional garage entrances and exits, and direct access to Potomac Expressway from the Kennedy Center site. Pedestrian access was improved by replacing the steep ramp with a monumental stairway and a fully accessible walkway. The site was also completely re-landscaped and new lighting of the building and the grounds was installed.

To heighten security, an electronic security system, including closed circuit cameras, has been installed throughout the building and grounds, vehicular bollards were

installed at the entrance to the service tunnel, the entire key and access control system was upgraded and a new security operations center was installed.

To prepare for this re-authorization proposal, the Center completed a full update of its Comprehensive Building Plan with the latest information on the facility's condition and need for improvement. A team of architectural and engineering consultants surveyed the entire building and recommended upgrades based on the current needs and conditions, provided cost estimates, and organized the improvements into a new implementation plan.

This plan reflects the Center's continued priorities of accessibility and life safety, as well as facility infrastructure. The completion of life safety efforts identified in previous plans, such as installation of sprinklers on the Roof Terrace level and the renovation of the Eisenhower Theater, take precedence in the near future. Over the authorization period, the Center's capital repair implementation plan includes:

Installation of sprinkler systems and replacement of fire doors on the Roof Terrace level, as well as minor architectural upgrades, such as carpet replacement, wall and ceiling finishes, and new lighting,

Renovation of miscellaneous toilet rooms throughout the building to address accessibility issues and to update fixtures and finishes,

Improvements to exit stairwells including upgrades to stair treads, handrails, lighting, signage, ventilation, finishes, and doors, and upgrades to door hardware, such as handles and openers, to meet accessibility requirements.

In the longer term, as the life safety and accessibility work throughout the facility is completed, the focus will shift to facility infrastructure improvements. These projects will include:

Replacement of the Curtain Walls, which involves replacing all of the large floor-to-ceiling windows and gaskets in the Grand Foyer, Roof Terrace, Hall of States, and Hall of Nations.

Repairs to the exterior marble where panels have become broken or discolored and joints have deteriorated.

Renovations to areas in the south block underneath the Concert Hall, which were not addressed during the larger Concert Hall renovation. In addition, this project will address some environmental issues in instrument storage locations, on the stage, and in the upper levels of the auditorium. This work will provide the environment required for a major national orchestra and associated priceless instruments.

Significant work on aging mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. The Center's building systems primarily include original equipment, and although maintained

and serviced regularly to ensure proper function, those elements not previously replaced in theater renovation projects are reaching the end of normative service life and are showing signs of failure and deterioration. This re-authorization proposal will allow the Center to embark on a systematic rehabilitation campaign. Mechanical system upgrades will include repair, refurbishment, or replacement of heating and cooling equipment such as boilers, air-handling units, humidifiers, pumps, valves, and piping. Plumbing systems will also receive major upgrades. The electrical systems will receive a complete overhaul, including replacement of aging electrical wiring, panels, and devices. The emergency power transfer switches will be replaced, and safety and protective devices will be tested and upgraded as necessary. Upgrades also will be made to technical stage systems, including various cyclical replacements, audiovisual systems, and rigging components. These projects, though not obvious to the public, are critical to the continued safe and efficient operation of the memorial.

Two additional projects affecting public spaces will be initiated towards the end of this five-year period – the renovation of the Theater Lab and the Terrace Theater. The Theater Lab, a flexible black box theater space, will be renovated to create permanent walls, address sound transmission problems, and upgrade finishes and building infrastructure.

The Terrace Theater, over 30 years old, will receive improvements in accessibility, seating, finishes, patron circulation and building and theatrical system infrastructure. Accessible seating is currently only available in the rear of the theater. While this is not in violation of accessibility laws, it does not conform with our standards of service to people with disabilities; it would be ideal to provide additional dispersed seating. I should note that project design will start during this five year period, but the bulk of the expense, including construction expense, will fall in 2013, and a subsequent authorization.

These projects, to be completed over the next five years, and many other long-range projects in planning constitute an aggressive plan in order to keep the Center operating in a way befitting a Presidential memorial.

Let me finish by expressing gratitude for this opportunity to update you on the many activities of the Kennedy Center. I thank the subcommittee for its continued support of the Center and it is my hope that your subcommittee and Congress will receive this proposal favorably. I am pleased to answer any questions. Thank you very much.