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**SENATOR COLLINS' BILL TO CREATE NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY  
MUSEUM ONE STEP CLOSER TO REALITY**

*Legislation Passed Unanimously out of Senate Committee on Environment and Public  
Works*

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Senator Susan Collins' legislation that would pave the way for a National Women's History Museum on a site near the National Mall in Washington, D.C. passed late yesterday unanimously out of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The Museum would honor the Great Lady from Maine, Margaret Chase Smith, and other groundbreaking women throughout history.

Senator Collins, along with a bipartisan group of her colleagues; Senators Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Tex., introduced the legislation last month that directs the current land owner, the General Services Administration, to sell the property to the Museum for fair market value and then the Museum will develop the site at 12th Street and Independence Avenue, SW.

"A women's history museum is long overdue in the nation's capital," said Senator Collins. "It would be the first institution in the region that showcases the many important social, economic, cultural, and political contributions that women have made to our country.

"The Museum would help ensure that future generations understand what we owe to the many generations of American women-like my role model, Margaret Chase Smith-- that helped build, sustain, and advance our society. It is a great use for an empty lot on our National Mall, and it makes good fiscal sense.

"It is important to note that taxpayers will not shoulder the funding of this project. The proposed legislation calls for no new federal program and no new claims on the budget. The bill would simply direct the General Services Administration to negotiate and enter into an occupancy agreement with the National Women's History Museum, Inc. to establish a Museum on a tract of land near the Smithsonian Museums, close to the National Mall.

"In fact, the Museum would be putting dollars in the federal government's pocket in order to occupy this space because the transaction would be at fair market value. This bill would be a win-win for the taxpayers and the Museum," concluded Senator Collins.

Under Senator Collins' bill, the National Women's History Museum organization would be completely responsible for the design and construction of the museum. It is estimated that such a museum would draw more than 1.5 million visitors to the nation's capital each year.

Senators Patty Murray, D-Wash., Olympia Snowe, R-Me., Mary Landrieu, D-La., Debbie Stabenow, D-Mi., Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., Lisa Murkowski, R-Ak., Jeanne Shaheen, D-Nh., Kirsten Gillibrand, D-Ny., Kelly Ayotte, R-Nh., Dianne Feinstein, D-Ca., Kay Hagan, D-Nc., Amy Klobuchar, D-Mn., Claire McCaskill, D-Ms., Joe Lieberman, ID-Ct., Daniel Akaka, D-Hi., Mark Pryor, D-Ark., Jeff Merkley, D-Or., and Mark Begich, D-Ak., are also co-sponsoring this legislation.

The legislation will now proceed to the Senate floor for a vote.

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