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INSIDE REPORT

Why Kennedy won't let NEH hear Prof. Iannone's advice

SEN. Edward M. Kennedy told supporters of New York University Professor Carol Iannone that he has to oppose her confirmation for the National Endowment for the Humanities advisory council not because she fails the test of "political correctness" but because of personal commitments he has made.

As Kennedy told the story to Iannone's backers, her PC critics from the academic community had come to him for support. According to Kennedy, he told Iannone's foes that he would not help them on this cause and they had to run their own campaign. Now that they have followed his advice, added the senator, he simply could not vote against them.

Labor Committee Chairman Kennedy was reminded by Iannone's supporters that the Washington Post, no bastion of conservativism, urged her confirmation. That was impressive, he said, but it would have helped her if the New York Times had also backed her.