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Larry McMurtry

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May 9, 1991

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman
Committee on Labor and Human Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6300

Dear Senator Kennedy:

I write to express the concerns of the Executive Board of the PEN American Center in regard to the nomination of Carol Iannone for a seat on the NEH National Council for the Humanities.

Our concern is that Carol Iannone’s appointment to the Council is premature. Members of the Council are charged with advising the Chairperson in regard to a wide range of programs, policies, and procedures. The post is an important one; those selected for it have usually established distinguished records in the humanities: scholarly, administrative, or creative.

As her curriculum vitae makes clear, Carol Iannone’s contributions in these areas have so far been slight. A few book reviews, three or four scholarly essays, some teaching, and a little editorial work do not, in our view, qualify her for this very important post.

We believe that the health of the NEH -- and, consequently, the cultural health of the nation itself -- would be better served by an appointee whose experience is more extensive and whose own contribution to the work of the humanities more substantial.

Most cordially yours,

[Signature]

Larry McMurtry