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Hackney, Sheldon: Humanities Chairman Nomination Hearing (1993): News Article 62

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Ways & Means

Scholars who support Sheldon Hackney's nomination as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities are getting a little nervous. They believe that supporters of Lynne V. Cheney, who resigned from the chairmanship last year, are trying to embarrass Mr. Hackney with reports about "political correctness" at the University of Pennsylvania, where he is president.

"This certainly appears to be an organized campaign," said Jamil Zainalidin, president of the Federation of State Humanities Councils.

Mr. Hackney's supporters fear that reports about recent incidents at Penn will provide ammunition for Senators to fight his nomination. His critics say they are just trying to let people know the truth about him.

A number of scholars and newspaper columnists have criticized him for failing to reprimand a group of black students at the university who removed 14,000 copies of the campus newspaper because they objected to the views expressed in some of the newspaper's columns (*The Chronicle*, April 28).

Mr. Hackney also is being criticized for allowing a student to be tried for violating Penn's speech code. A white freshman has been accused of racial harassment for calling a group of black students "water buffalo." The students say the comment was a racial slur. The white student denies the charge.

A spokesman for Sen. Dan Coats, an Indiana Republican and a member of the committee that will consider Mr. Hackney's nomination, said the Senator would question Penn's speech code.

"Senator Coats is aware of Penn's speech codes and is troubled by them," the spokesman said.

A Democratic Senate source said, however, that while Republican concerns might cause Mr. Hackney "discomfort," they should not endanger his nomination.