

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 19, 2019

Lonnie G. Bunch III
Secretary
Smithsonian Institution
PO Box 37012
Washington, DC 20013

Secretary Bunch,

I write to request that you remove the Sackler family name from the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of Art.

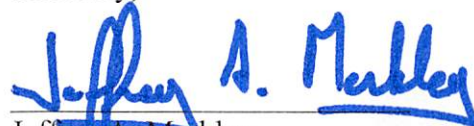
The Sackler family, as you may know, built their fortune through their pharmaceutical company, Purdue Pharma, and the making of OxyContin. While the Sackler family has provided philanthropic support to several major cultural institutions around the world, including the Smithsonian's Sackler Gallery of Art, the Sackler family hooked thousands of Americans on OxyContin through aggressive and misleading marketing tactics and profited from one of the deadliest public health crises in our country.

Contrary to prior public representations, recently uncovered documents show clearly that Sackler family members personally and aggressively drove Purdue's strategy to get Americans hooked on OxyContin. Emails made public through lawsuits now show that multiple family members were personally involved in the strategy to promote and continue selling high doses of opioid painkillers. Richard Sackler, the former president and chairman of Purdue, personally recommended a PR strategy of blaming victims for their own addictions, and responded to the news of 59 OxyContin-related deaths in a single state, "This is not too bad. It could have been far worse."

The Sackler name has no place in taxpayer-funded public institutions, such as the Freer-Sackler Gallery, and I ask that you remove the name from the gallery.

Thank you for your attention to this letter, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator