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# This place is a dump!

By LARRY MARGASAK

**The Senate's top two leaders** complained Wednesday to the architect of the Capitol that senators' offices are in a "general state of uncleanliness" and said they're tired of uncollected trash, dirty restrooms, bugs and layers of dust in the Capitol complex. Other senators echoed their complaints.

Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., and Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., aimed their stern letter at embattled Architect of the Capitol Alan M. Hantman. The rebuke was read to Hantman during a hearing examining the upkeep of congressional buildings and treatment of Congress' work force.

Senators reminded the architect of citations during the past year for poor fire and worker safety, and angrily termed "a horror story" the supervision of a new child-care building delayed by a potentially deadly mold.

"Some offices are so poorly cleaned that dust heavily accumulates, trash collection does not always occur on a daily basis, and internal stairs and hallways often are not vacuumed or cleaned," Lott and Daschle wrote, adding to the list of woes.

Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., in a separate letter, demanded relief for Senate restaurant workers who were reporting "verbal and physical abuse" by supervisors in the architect's office.

Hantman acknowledged to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration that his office, which is charged with upkeep of congressional properties, has had some problems.

"I think improvement is necessary in the cleanliness of the buildings," he said.

He blamed delays with the child-care center on contractors and said allegations of mistreatment of employees "could not be

substantiated." But he said any lack of respect for workers was "not acceptable."

Over the last year, Hantman's stewardship of the Capitol grounds has been criticized for a lack of fire and workplace safety standards. A congressional health and safety agency issued several citations to the office.

Lott and Daschle raised new concerns. They wrote of "a general state of uncleanliness throughout the Senate office buildings" and cited "unwashed windows, bug infestations and major plumbing leaks."

"Public restrooms and public eating areas are expected to be kept clean and sanitary, but we are told that is not always the case," the leaders wrote.

Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., told Hantman that the problem might have something to do a reduction in Senate custodial workers over the past six years from 130 to 87.

Committee Chairman Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., called the day-care center delays "a horror story." The facility, a new building, was supposed to open two years ago but was delayed largely due to the discovery of potentially deadly stachybotrys mold.

With the mold finally eradicated, the planned Sept. 1 opening has been delayed again, because new mold spores have been found - less serious but enough to keep the children out, said Lisa Tuite, a Senate employee and president of the center's board of directors.

"As one would expect, the cost of the mismanagement by the (architect's) office is more than any non-profit can stand," she wrote McConnell, citing a financial burden of \$140,000 based on lost revenue and the hiring of a consultant to deal with the mold.

While the Senate is financing construction, parents pay \$8,000 to \$9,000 annually for their children to receive day care, currently at an older, smaller building.

"We've got a bunch of employees here concerned about their children because you got this all fouled up," McConnell told Hantman, who estimated to the skeptical senators the center would be ready in three to five weeks.

"We have a real crisis here," added Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., who suggested to Hantman that "we charge your budget" for the parents' losses. Architect officials said they are formally seeking permission from the Senate to transfer money to the center's treasury.

Feinstein told Hantman that he should "have someone down there full-time to get this project finished," and added, after a pause, "How about you yourself getting down there?" She attributed the problems to "lack of oversight and leadership" by Hantman's office.

Mikulski wrote Hantman on behalf of the Senate restaurant workers, stating: "I firmly believe that the architect of the Capitol should be as committed to the social architecture of the Capitol work force as he or she is to the physical architecture of our buildings and grounds."

Last December, the House inspector general said the U.S. Capitol and five House office buildings were firetraps that leave visitors, members of Congress and employees with an "undue risk of loss of life and property."

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