

MAJORITY MEMBERS:

JOHN KLINE, MINNESOTA, Chairman  
THOMAS E. PETRI, WISCONSIN  
HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, CALIFORNIA  
JUDY BIGGERT, ILLINOIS  
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, PENNSYLVANIA  
JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA  
BOB GOODLATTE, VIRGINIA  
DUNCAN HUNTER, CALIFORNIA  
DAVID P. ROE, TENNESSEE  
GLENN THOMPSON, PENNSYLVANIA  
TIM WALBERG, MICHIGAN  
SCOTT DesJARLAIS, TENNESSEE  
RICHARD L. HANNA, NEW YORK  
TODD ROKITA, INDIANA  
LARRY BUCSHON, INDIANA  
TREY GOWDY, SOUTH CAROLINA  
LOU BARLETTA, PENNSYLVANIA  
KRISTI L. NOEM, SOUTH DAKOTA  
MARTHA ROBY, ALABAMA  
JOSEPH J. HECK, NEVADA  
DENNIS A. ROSS, FLORIDA  
MIKE KELLY, PENNSYLVANIA



COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
AND THE WORKFORCE  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2181 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

MINORITY MEMBERS:

GEORGE MILLER, CALIFORNIA  
Senior Democratic Member  
DALE E. KILDEE, MICHIGAN, Vice Chairman  
ROBERT E. ANDREWS, NEW JERSEY  
ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, VIRGINIA  
LYNN C. WOOLSEY, CALIFORNIA  
RUBEN HINOJOSA, TEXAS  
CAROLYN Mc CARTHY, NEW YORK  
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS  
DENNIS J. KUDINICH, OHIO  
RUSH D. HOLT, NEW JERSEY  
SUSAN A. DAVIS, CALIFORNIA  
RAUL M. GRIJALVA, ARIZONA  
TIMOTHY H. BISHOP, NEW YORK  
DAVID LOEBSACK, IOWA  
MAZIE HIRONO, HAWAII  
JASON ALTMIRE, PENNSYLVANIA  
MARCIA L. FUDGE, OHIO

September 7, 2012

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

The Head Start Act requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to ensure the designation renewal system (DRS) put in place in 2007 to increase program accountability is "fair, consistent, and transparent."<sup>1</sup> However, the department has refused to release any information, including basic facts and figures, during the implementation of the process, falling far short of this important requirement.

As noted by many observers and press reports, information regarding the grant competition's number of applicants, content of applications, and identity of the grant review panel has not been made public.<sup>2</sup> Widespread concern with the program's selection process and perceptions that grants are being awarded without regard for the merits of the applicants led to the inclusion of the DRS process in the last reauthorization of the Head Start Act. Unfortunately, HHS' continued lack of transparency serves to justify doubts surrounding the department's ability to improve the quality of the Head Start program.

To ensure a transparent and fair process as intended by Congress, we respectfully request you provide the committee with the following information:

- (1) The number of applicants currently competing for Head Start and Early Head Start grants/slots through the DRS process. Indicate the names of the applicants and whether

<sup>1</sup> Section 641(c)(8) of the Head Start Act, amended by Public Law 110-134.

<sup>2</sup> "Transparency Watch: Why Is Head Start Competition So Secretive?" *Education Week*, August 20, 2012.

the applicant is currently receiving a grant to operate a Head Start or Early Head Start program, a delegate agency currently operating a Head Start or Early Head Start program, and has or has not been required to compete for continued federal funding by DRS.

- (2) An overview of each grant application and evidence of quality of services as related to applicants' past performance, workforce, organizational capacity, and budget. In addition, please provide the overall score and rank of applicants currently participating in, or planning to coordinate with, their states' Quality Rating and Improvement System or state equivalent.
- (3) The professional background of the grant reviewers, including level of experience in early childhood or related fields and expertise in fiscal and organizational operations.
- (4) A description of how and why the DRS grantee selection process differs significantly from the process utilized by the U.S. Department of Education and HHS through its Race to the Top competition, which included publicly releasing the number of applicants, potential grantee applications, and names and background of peer reviewers.
- (5) The steps HHS and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) have taken to ensure fairness in the submission, review, and scoring of Head Start and Early Head Start grant applications.

We would appreciate a response by Friday, September 28, 2012. If you have questions concerning this request, please contact Mandy Schaumburg with the committee staff at (202) 225-6558 or [mandy.schaumburg@mail.house.gov](mailto:mandy.schaumburg@mail.house.gov).

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,



JOHN KLINE

Chairman

Committee on Education and the Workforce



LAMAR ALEXANDER

Member of Congress