

May 11, 2007

Honorable Howard "Buck" McKeon
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman McKeon:

I am writing in anticipation of your committee's work on the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). We both agree that reauthorizing these two laws as quickly as possible is essential. Certainly, many troubling stories about Reading First and student lending have recently surfaced in the press. As I pointed out in testimony before the House Education and Labor Committee yesterday, the Department takes these issues seriously, and we are working quickly to ensure the public's trust in these programs. To that end, I believe that we must begin in earnest to take concrete steps to reauthorize NCLB and the HEA.

I acknowledge your committee's oversight function and I understand that the record remains open from yesterday's hearing. I look forward to answering your questions and those of other members, and to meeting with any members who would like to discuss these matters in further detail.

I am hopeful that the pursuit of oversight will not delay moving forward legislatively on these two important laws. Indeed, reauthorization of NCLB and the HEA is an effective way to address the issues raised by your oversight activities.

I believe the coming weeks afford us the opportunity to collaborate to strengthen NCLB and the HEA. So that we may best prepare for this essential work, I offer to convene, at the earliest opportunity, a working luncheon with you and your staff. Together, we can make progress that will benefit America's students, parents and taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Margaret Spellings