

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
14TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

2331 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3214
(202) 225-7944

COMMITTEES:
FINANCIAL SERVICES
GOVERNMENT REFORM

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-3214

DISTRICT OFFICES:

1651 THIRD AVENUE
SUITE 311
NEW YORK, NY 10128
(212) 860-0606

28-11 ASTORIA BOULEVARD
ASTORIA, NY 11102
(718) 932-1804

WEBSITE: www.house.gov/maloney

The Honorable Tommy Thompson
Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

July 6, 2004

Dear Secretary Thompson,

I am concerned by a recent report by ABC News, "*Milk Money*", that the Department of Health and Human Services has decided to alter an Ad Council public service campaign to promote breastfeeding after several formula companies reportedly raised their own concerns over the campaign. It was also reported in this article that changes to the campaign occurred after you privately met with formula makers, but turned down requests to meet with breastfeeding advocates.

First, I would like to applaud HHS work to promote breastfeeding. It is an important public health issue that deserves greater awareness. In your work to promote breastfeeding, it is our understanding that HHS has been working with the Ad Council over the past year developing a campaign aimed at informing and promoting breastfeeding among women in the United States. During this time HHS, specifically the Office of Women's Health, and the Ad Council has held close to 40 focus groups to develop a message that would best promote breastfeeding.

Building on their more than 60 years of experience, the results of the numerous focus groups and the science provided by HHS, it is our understanding that the Ad Council developed a campaign that they feel would best inform and influence breastfeeding in the United States. What I do not understand is why parts of this campaign has reportedly changed or cancelled due to pressures from formula makers. It is my hope that the only reason for the changes were based solely on science and that HHS delayed the initial launch of the campaign only to make it more effective and alleged interference by formula makers had no part in the delay or changes to the campaign.

Mr. Secretary, in order to clearly show what changes have been made, please provide copies of any materials that were originally developed for this campaign, but will not be used. Accompanying these materials, please provide an explanation for why it was not used.

As you know, the United States has one of the lowest rates of breastfeeding in the industrialized world despite the overwhelming evidence that it provides significant advantages to the health of both the mother and child, it is imperative that HHS and the Ad Council work together in promoting a campaign that has the best interest of breastfeeding mothers and children in mind.

I thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Edward Mills of my staff at edward.mills@mail.house.gov or (202) 225-7944 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress