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May 18, 2009

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman
The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member:

During the forthcoming deliberations on the Fiscal Year 2010 Appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, we hope that you will note our strong objection to the President's proposal to alter the way funding has been provided to grantees as authorized by the Alaska Native Educational Equity, Support, and Assistance Act.

The President's budget request proposes to withhold funding for the named grant recipients authorized by Section 7304(d)(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This section directs that the Secretary of Education "shall make available" specific sums to support specific grantees and activities regarding Alaska Native parenting education, cultural education, dropout prevention, and community engagement. These grantees' programs have proven to be effective.

As you know, Alaska Native students experience extraordinary challenges in achieving academic proficiency and are less likely to achieve successful and productive lives as adults than other groups of Americans. The attainment of educational success is critical to the improvement of the long-term well-being of Alaska Natives. The directed grantees' programs are effective in assisting Alaska Native students and communities to successfully meet the challenges they face.

We believe that the President's proposal to alter the way funding is provided to the named grant recipients is in error. Accordingly, we would appreciate your rejection of the President's proposal.

Sincerely,



Daniel K. Inouye
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator