

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 8, 2012

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

Secretary Sebelius:

We write to request the results of the Head Start “Third Grade Follow-Up Study” that had been scheduled to be completed in September 2011, as well as information about the reasons why the release of that study has been delayed until September 2012.

Congress and the American people deserve the opportunity to review the evidence about whether the Head Start program is benefiting the children that it serves. In 1998, Congress mandated that the Department of Health and Human Services conduct a national evaluation of the impact of Head Start on children served. In 2006, the Department awarded a follow-up contract to continue the evaluation of Head Start’s impact through students’ third grade year.

We understand that the data collection for the “Third Grade Follow-Up” study was completed in the spring of 2008. Four years seems to be a sufficient period of time for the Department and the researchers that conducted the data collection to analyze the results.

Given the critical importance of understanding whether the Head Start program is benefitting the children it serves, we request the following information:

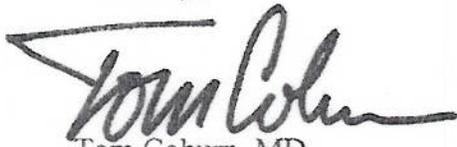
- Any reports (including drafts) that Westat or any other researchers involved with the project have conducted about the Third-Grade Follow Up study results.
- Any reports (including drafts) that the Department has written analyzing the results of the Third Grade Follow-Up Study results.
- An explanation why the Department decided to extend the Head Start study project period to September 2012 and further delay the release of this evaluation.

We also request that the Department brief our staffs about the status of this study and our questions.

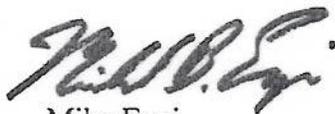
The American people—including the families of the estimated 904,000 children currently enrolled—deserve to understand how this program is affecting the children it serves.

We request an answer to this inquiry by March 16, 2012. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Tom Coburn, MD
U.S. Senator



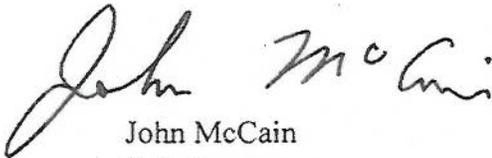
Mike Enzi
U.S. Senator



Lamar Alexander
U.S. Senator



Richard Burr
U.S. Senator



John McCain
U.S. Senator