

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 8, 2011

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20202
via facsimile: 202-401-1438

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In recent months, we have been hearing more from my constituents regarding their grave concerns about the encroachment of federal policies on local education matters. Most specifically, there is concern that the U.S. Department of Education is essentially forcing states to adopt the Common Core Standards or risk losing access to grants such as Race to the Top and waivers for No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

We are aware that the Common Core Standards developed by the National Governors Association in conjunction with the Chief State School Officers are meant to be just that: standards. However, the inclusion of "illustrative texts" pushes these standards dangerously close to becoming curriculum. As you are aware, it is currently a violation of federal law to adopt a national curriculum.

We believe that states should be allowed the freedom to adopt their own high quality standards, a rigorous curriculum to meet these standards, and strict assessments to evaluate students' progress.

Tying access to much-needed federal resources to national standards is inappropriate and may well exceed statutory authority. Therefore, we ask that the Department of Education refrain from using the adoption of the Common Core Standards as weighted criteria for NCLB waivers and from future grant opportunities.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact us in the future about this matter.

Sincerely,


Honorable Robert Aderholt


Honorable Jo Bonner


Honorable Mo Brooks

CC: Alabama State Board of Education

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