



# National Coalition For Literacy

TO: Transition Team

FROM: National Coalition for Literacy

RE: Appointment of a Director for the National Institute for Literacy and new members of the Advisory Board

As you consider appointments for the new Administration, the National Coalition for Literacy urges you to appoint a director for the National Institute for Literacy with a background and expertise in adult education and adult literacy.

The Institute was created at a time when there was very little focus on adult education and when a national assessment demonstrated that approximately 94 million individuals did not have the literacy skills they required to reach their full potential. Many did not even have the skills to read a bus schedule or fill out an application for employment.

According to the most recent National Assessment of Adult Literacy, the situation has not changed. With our economy in trouble and a need to stay competitive in the world marketplace, we must ensure our nation's workforce is well-educated. We cannot afford to wait until today's students join the workforce. We must look now to training and retraining our current workers and making sure their academic and literacy skills meet today's demands. We must also ensure that parents have the education and literacy skills they need to help their children succeed in school.

Over the past few years, the current Advisory Board has taken steps to broaden NIFL's focus to include cradle-to-grave literacy. This is not consistent with current law and has reduced NIFL's ability to fill a need for resources for the adult education community. There are numerous resources within the Department of Education for the K-12 education system. This is not true for adult education.

Part of the problem is that the majority of the individuals on the Advisory Board do not have a background or expertise in the field of adult literacy. With multiple vacancies on the Board at this time, we also strongly encourage you to appoint members to the Advisory Board who have the necessary experience or expertise to make decisions regarding NIFL's activities so they meet the needs of the adult education field.

Although NIFL has been given dissemination responsibilities under the No Child Left Behind Act, this is separate from NIFL's responsibilities under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and should not affect the Board or the Director position of NIFL. The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act provides a funding stream for NIFL to fulfill its obligations to serve as a national resource for adult education and adult literacy programs. Those funds should only be

used for this purpose. The No Child Left Behind Act includes a separate funding stream for NIFL to meet its obligations under that Act.

We close by requesting that you expedite the process for appointing a new Director with expertise and experience in adult education and recommending individuals for the board with similar qualifications. If we can be of any assistance in recommending individuals with the appropriate qualifications, please contact our president, Sherrie Claiborne, at [sherrienevilsclaiborne@hotmail.com](mailto:sherrienevilsclaiborne@hotmail.com) or our Policy Director, Lynn Selmsler at [lcselmsler@cox.net](mailto:lcselmsler@cox.net) or (703-560-5541).