



National Coalition For Literacy

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education ◦ Adult Literacy Media Alliance ◦ American Council on Education, GED Testing Service ◦ American Institute for Research ◦ American Library Association ◦ Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee ◦ Commission on Adult Basic Education ◦ Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy ◦ Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy and the Goodling Institute for Research, Pennsylvania State University ◦ International Reading Association ◦ National Center for Family Literacy ◦ National Council of State Directors of Adult Education ◦ National Even Start Association ◦ ProLiteracy Worldwide ◦ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. ◦ World Education

June 10, 2008

The Honorable Margaret Spellings
Secretary
U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20202

The Honorable Mike Leavitt
Secretary
U. S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20201

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
U. S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20210

Dear Members of the Interagency Group:

I am writing on behalf of the National Coalition for Literacy to express concern about current efforts to replace the Director of the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) before a new President is elected and takes office.

The Coalition includes twenty-six national adult education and family literacy organizations. A major goal of the Coalition is to work to improve the literacy of our Nation's citizens. As such, we have closely followed the activities of NIFL since its inception.

In recent years there has been an effort to redirect NIFL's efforts towards K-12 education and away from its legislative focus on adult education. While the law does not

speaking of cradle to grave literacy work, it is our position that the current Advisory Board has encouraged NIFL to move in that direction.

After the National Adult Literacy Survey found over 90 million adults in need of literacy services, Congress determined that there was a lack of focus on adult education within the Department of Education and that the field needed more resources to be able to perform its job and provide quality services to program participants. NIFL was created to fill this void. This situation has not changed and the need has not abated.

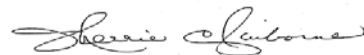
The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, which authorizes the Institute, has expired and has yet to be reauthorized. Until such time as the program is reauthorized and the mission of NIFL is clearly established in law, we believe it is unwise to appoint a Director who may not have the skills to carry out the work of the Institute.

The Coalition's position is that it should be left to the new Administration to fill this position. Should the Interagency Group believe there should be a new Director in place at this time, it has the option of appointing an interim director until the new Administration is in place.

The work of the Institute is important to the Coalition and its member organizations. Because we work with some of our nation's most vulnerable citizens we must ensure that NIFL and its director are in a position to be a strong resource for the adult education community.

Thank you for your attention to this letter. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me or Lynn Selmsler, NCL Policy Director (lcselmsler@cox.net).

Sincerely,



Sherrie Claiborne
President
sherrienevilsclaiborne@hotmail.com