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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3204

October 18, 2007

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to express our deep concern over the appointment of Dr. Susan Orr as Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population Affairs.

The position to which Dr. Orr has been appointed gives her authority over Title X which funds low-cost, confidential family planning and health screening services that would otherwise be out of reach for millions of Americans. Dr. Orr will also oversee counseling and providing information to women on a broad range of family planning and reproductive services, including contraception.

Dr. Orr has a troubling history of opposing federal funding for contraception, which is counter to the mission of the office to which she has been appointed. In 2001, she spoke in favor of a Bush administration plan to drop a requirement that health insurance for federal employees must cover birth control. "We're quite pleased because fertility is not a disease," Dr. Orr said at the time on contraception. "It's not a medical necessity that you have it."

Dr. Orr also publicly urged President Bush to overrule scientists and doctors to revoke FDA-approval of RU-486. Before joining the Bush Administration, she had been a senior director of an organization that labeled the scientifically-based FDA approval of Plan B "a grave threat to women's health."

Unfortunately, this nomination is part of a disturbing Administration pattern of disregarding science and placing ideology ahead of sound decisions affecting women's health. In fact, last November, many of us opposed the nomination of Eric Keroack to the same position because of similar concerns.

The American people deserve a qualified public health expert who will ensure that the needs of women and families are met. In light of Dr. Orr's ideological record on Title X services, we urge you to withdraw her appointment and select an appointee who will actively implement Title X as intended by Congress under current law.

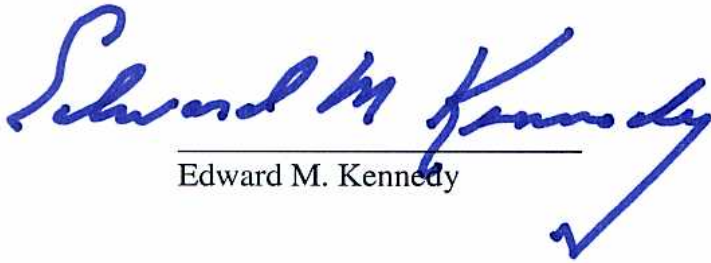
Sincerely,



Hillary Rodham Clinton



Patty Murray



Edward M. Kennedy



Maria Cantwell



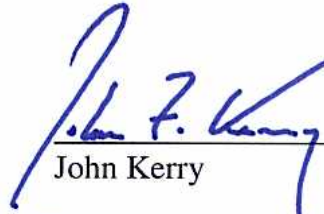
Tom Harkin



Bernard Sanders



Barbara Mikulski



John Kerry



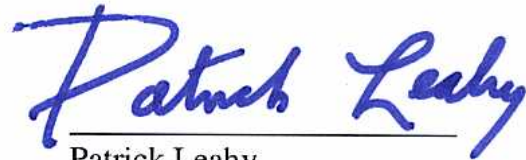
Sheldon Whitehouse



Sherrod Brown



Frank Lautenberg



Patrick Leahy

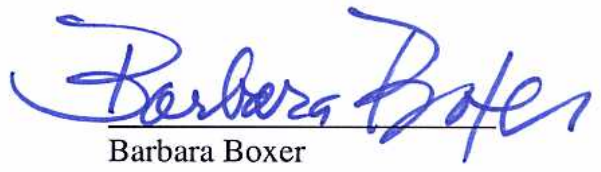


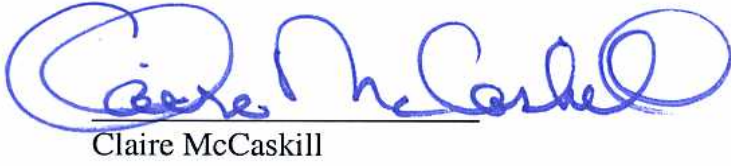
Charles E. Schumer




Benjamin Cardin


Robert Menendez


Barbara Boxer


Claire McCaskill


Richard Durbin


Christopher Dodd

