MAJORITY MEMBERS:

GEORGE MILLER, CALIFORNIA, Chairman

DALE E. KILDEE, MICHIGAN, Vice Chairman
DONALD M. PAYNE, NEW JERSEY
ROBERT E. ANDREWS, NEW JERSEY
ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, VIRGINIA
LYNN C. WOOLSEY, CALIFORNIA
RUBÉN HINOJOSA, TEXAS
CAROLYN McCARTHY, NEW YORK
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, OHIO
DAVID WU, OREGON
RUSH HOLT, NEW JERSEY
SUSAN A. DAVIS, CALIFORNIA
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, ARIZONA
TIMOTHY H. BISHOP, NEW YORK
JOE SESTAK, PENNSYLVANIA
DAVID LOEBSACK, IOWA
MAZIE HIRONO, HAWAII
JASON ALTMIRE, PENNSYLVANIA
PHIL HARE, ILLINOIS
YVETTE D. CLARKE, NEW YORK
JOE COURTNEY, CONNECTICUT
CAROL SHEA-PORTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE
MARCIA L. FUDGE, OHIO
JARED POLIS, COLORADO
PAUL TONKO, NEW YORK
PEDRO R. PIERLUISI, PUERTO RICO
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN,
N. MARIANA ISLANDS
DINA TITUS, NEVADA
JUDY CHU, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2181 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

MINORITY MEMBERS:

JOHN KLINE, MINNESOTA,
Senior Republican Member

THOMAS E. PETRI, WISCONSIN
HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, CALIFORNIA
PETER HOEKSTRA, MICHIGAN
MICHAEL N. CASTLE, DELAWARE
MARK E. SOUDER, INDIANA
VERNON J. EHLERS, MICHIGAN
JUDY BIGGERT, ILLINOIS
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, PENNSYLVANIA
JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS, WASHINGTON
TOM PRICE, GEORGIA
ROB BISHOP, UTAH
BRETT GUTHRIE, KENTUCKY
BILL CASSIDY, LOUISIANA
TOM McCLINTOCK, CALIFORNIA
DUNCAN D. HUNTER, CALIFORNIA
DAVID P. ROE, TENNESSEE
GLENN THOMPSON, PENNSYLVANIA

October 16, 2009

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

The individuals charged with operating and overseeing our nation's schools bear a tremendous responsibility. Our teachers and principals on the front lines and the public servants in the nation's capital have been entrusted with shaping and influencing the lives of the next generation. As a parent and a grandparent, I expect these individuals to demonstrate sound judgment and responsibility. As a policymaker, I have a duty to ensure those same qualifications are met. When a public servant has not demonstrated the requisite judgment and responsibility for the office, they must be held accountable. Accordingly, I request Kevin Jennings be removed from his position as Assistant Deputy Secretary for the Office of Safe and Drug Free-Schools.

The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools administers, coordinates, and recommends policies to promote school safety, character education, and drug prevention. Sound judgment and a proven track record of promoting student safety must be demonstrated by the individual charged with keeping our children and our schools safe and drug free.

Of his own accord, Mr. Jennings has written and spoken openly about numerous incidents in his past that directly controvert the mission of the office he now heads. He has acknowledged a history of drug use as a student, and he has shared the details of an incident in which a minor student confided in him regarding a dangerous sexual encounter with an adult, which Mr. Jennings failed to report to law enforcement or the student's parents.

Although Mr. Jennings heads an office directly responsible for hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars and numerous federally governed programs, he was not subject to the rigorous vetting process of confirmation by the U.S. Senate. As such, it falls to you to ensure the head of the OSDFS demonstrates the judgment and responsibility imperative to successful execution of the office. Because Mr. Jennings has demonstrated neither, I am compelled to call on you to see to his swift removal from office.

Sincerely,

John Kline

John Kline
Senior Republican Member