

\_\_\_\_\_, 2013

The Honorable \_\_\_[Senator's Name]\_\_\_  
United States Senate  
\_\_\_[Office Address]\_\_\_ Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_:

On behalf of \_\_\_[your ministry]\_\_\_ and the Old Dominion Association of Church Schools, I want to take this opportunity to express my serious concern regarding the continued expansion of federal involvement in early education. Though early education can certainly be beneficial to many students, involvement of the federal government in early education will prove costly, cumbersome, and counterproductive. Proposals such as the *Plan for Early Education for All Americans*, which further expands federal control of education, serve to undermine academic freedom, states rights, parental rights, and potentially the rights of faith-based organizations that already provide excellent preschool opportunities.

The White House Plan for Early Education for All Americans gives states incentives to implement additional regulations for pre-schools in the areas of teacher certification, curriculum, and assessment systems. Only two results of expanded regulation are certain: higher costs and fewer options for parents. Decades of federal intervention in early education, like the Head Start program, have produced little if any long-term benefit to students. Despite the failure of federal preschool spending to deliver on its promises, the current administration is seeking to dramatically increase its influence over and control of America's preschools.

Many ODACS schools offer pre-kindergarten classes, so we recognize that pre-school programs can be beneficial and helpful. However, increased federal involvement in early education is unnecessary. Private preschools in Virginia are sufficiently regulated by the state. Federal incentives will have the effect of increasing these requirements and thereby threatening the autonomy, mission, and effectiveness of the private and faith-based preschool centers. Furthermore, the expansion of power that the federal government seeks seems to contradict the self-evident principle that parents, not government, have the primary right and responsibility to oversee the upbringing of children. The title of the proposal, *Plan for Early Education for ALL AMERICANS*, implies that the end-game in this effort is to make preschool attendance compulsory; if that is so, the plan represents a serious threat to the rights of parents to rear their young children as they see fit.

We urge you to join with us in opposing this overreach of federal power. Thank you for your service in the Congress and for considering our opinion.

Sincerely,