



For Immediate Release

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Enzi: Lack of Transparency in Administration's Health Care Push Troubling

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, today called on the Secretary of Health and Human Services to provide details of the relationship between the agency and Dr. Jonathan Gruber, a consultant who has testified before Congress during hearings on health care reform.

Enzi voiced "deep concern" that Gruber, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, testified before Congress as an independent expert while neither he nor HHS disclosed the contract.

"Dr. Gruber's failure to disclose that he was a paid HHS consultant raises serious questions about the accuracy and reliability of his testimony," Enzi said.

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

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<http://help.senate.gov>

January 11, 2010

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

I am writing to express my deep concern about recent reports that MIT Professor Dr. Jonathan Gruber received approximately \$400,000 in payments from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) during a period of time in which he was actively promoting Democratic health care reform proposals.

In particular, reports of Dr. Gruber's contractual relationship with HHS and his failure to disclose it to the Senate raise serious questions about Dr. Gruber's veracity, and about the accuracy and reliability of his testimony before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee. Dr. Gruber, purporting to be an independent academic expert, testified that the Democratic health reform bill would not increase health insurance premiums. At no time before or after his testimony did Dr. Gruber disclose to the Senate the existence of his agreement with HHS or that he was being paid substantial amounts of money by the Obama Administration. At a minimum, this information should have been disclosed to the HELP Committee so Senators could determine whether they thought Dr. Gruber's testimony was credible.

Because transparency is essential to ensuring the public has confidence in their government, I am requesting that you provide me with a copy of any and all contracts covering Dr. Gruber's service, as well as time sheets, and copies of expense vouchers for related travel or other expenses. Please also provide me with copies of any communication, written or electronic, between HHS officials and Dr. Gruber. I also request that you specifically clarify when Dr. Gruber was paid for his services, how much Dr. Gruber was paid, and the scope of his work. I would also like an overview of the protocol HHS uses to enter into these types of contracts, whether this contract was competitively bid, and whether it was approved by the Counsel's office.

I am concerned that you failed to disclose the relationship between HHS and Dr. Gruber when I asked. Six months ago, I wrote to you and requested detailed information about HHS consultants. Your responses omitted any information related to him. Copies of my July 14th request and your responses are attached. Accordingly, I would like to know why HHS did not disclose Dr. Gruber's relationship in response to my request and ask HHS to immediately provide a complete list of all consultants hired since January 20, 2009 to advise on health care reform.

I look forward to your response, and would appreciate receiving this information no later than Tuesday, January 19, 2010. If you have questions about this request and are unable to reach me, please have your staff contact Amy Shank at (202) 224-6770.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Enzi
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman
Inspector General Daniel R. Levinson

attachments