

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 7, 2013

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write today to formally request that you immediately relieve Secretary Sebelius of her duties as Secretary of Health and Human Services.

After the failed October 1 launch of the federally-run Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) exchanges, HealthCare.gov, it must be acknowledged that the problems are profound, systemic and undeniable. The website repeatedly crashed. Many visitors were unable to create accounts. Individuals have reported waiting for days to register online and being put on hold for hours after calling the 1-800 helpline. Even after visitors create accounts, they are often unable to access accurate information about subsidies and Medicaid eligibility. And when a user does select an insurance plan, insurers have reported that Healthcare.gov transmits error-filled applications to the insurance companies. In addition, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) officials will not report how many individuals or families have been able to enroll in a plan on HealthCare.gov.

Regrettably, these problems were diagnosed early and ignored. *The New York Times* reports, "Confidential progress reports from the Health and Human Services Department show that senior officials repeatedly expressed doubts that the computer systems for the federal exchange would be ready on time" (*From the Start, Signs of Trouble at Health Portal*, October 12, 2013). The Government Accountability Office also issued warnings in June that HHS had to address many issues in a very short timeframe before the October 1 rollout. The contractor "status report" from early September warned that significant milestones were being missed and that timeframes were too short. Tests done just days before the launch reportedly showed the computer systems couldn't handle more than a few hundred hits at a time. However, the Secretary refused to give credence to these warnings.

In the days immediately following the launch, when it was apparent that problems were deep-seeded, Secretary Sebelius misled the public by claiming the issues were the result of high volume. According to her statements to the press, she even failed to inform you, the President under whom she serves, until days after the website launch that there were systemic problems needing millions more dollars and man hours to fix.

There is bipartisan agreement that accountability is paramount. Your former White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said, "When they get it fixed, I hope they fire some people that were in charge of making sure that this thing was supposed to work."

While assurances have been made that solutions are forthcoming, we have little confidence that immediate resolution is imminent. After spending more than \$400 million on the failed website, taxpayers should not trust the same failed leadership to fix it. We believe that action must be taken swiftly to protect the American people from further fallout. If a similar rollout from any other national company or private sector business resulted in overwhelming and sustained problems, a high profile dismissal would be expected and appropriate.

Even worse, millions of Americans will lose their existing coverage starting January 1, 2014, because it does not meet new Obamacare requirements. These people could be left without any insurance at all if the exchange systems are not working soon.

For these reasons, we ask that you relieve Secretary Sebelius of her position as Secretary of Health and Human Services immediately.

Sincerely,

Pat Blutes

Jim O'Rourke

7/8

James M. Callahan

John Cornyn

Lamar Alexander

Clayton K. Kinn

Mike Enzi

John Barrasso

Rand Paul