

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

October 19, 2011

The Honorable Bobby Jindal
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Governor Jindal:

I am disappointed and concerned that your administration failed to apply for available federal funds to enhance and improve early childhood education opportunities for the children of Louisiana. The Early Learning Challenge competition presented Louisiana with a wonderful opportunity to receive up to \$60 million to support the good, but incomplete, work going on at the state and local level in early childhood education. Experts from across Louisiana have collaborated for several months to produce a quality application which, from my understanding, would have advanced our state efforts. However, today is the application deadline for Early Learning Challenge and it has come to my attention that one will not be submitted by the state.

Experts agree that early childhood education is a smart investment in our children's success. According to Dr. James Heckman, a Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics, quality early childhood education has a 7 to 10 percent return on investment, as it improves outcomes in education, health, economic productivity, and even has the effect of bringing down crime rates. Over a lifetime, such a return on investment means that every dollar which schools invest in quality early childhood education can deliver a return \$60 to \$300 to society.

As you are most certainly aware, one-third of all children under the age of five in Louisiana live in poverty. You must agree that they need every opportunity to advance and move ahead, so it is puzzling to me how Louisiana could have passed up this opportunity. I hope you will respond in some detail given the broad parameters and flexibility of this grant and the fact that nearly all states have applied for the grant, making Louisiana the minority. I hope you will provide a detailed explanation as to how the administration failed to even submit an application. Your decision not to even compete for these funds is one that will have a negative impact on thousands of children in our state. I hope your reasons for failing to apply for these funds are strong enough to justify these consequences.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator

CC: Louisiana State Legislators

MLL:tbh