

February 23, 2010

Senator Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
Senator Michael B. Enzi
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senators Grassley and Enzi:

This letter responds to your letter to me dated January 26, 2010.

I appreciate your commitment to the principle of transparency in government and can assure you that I never intentionally withheld my two HHS contracts from Congress. Indeed, my contracts were publicly disclosed on the federal government website, www.usaspending.gov.

As you know, my professional research focuses on public finance and health economics and throughout my career I have worked with Democrats and Republicans alike on the critical issue of health care reform. I served as a consultant to then-Governor Mitt Romney in connection with health care reform efforts in Massachusetts and have also testified before the Congress on these issues. I was invited to testify jointly by the Majority and Minority Members of the Senate Finance Committee in the Summer of 2008 on the interaction of health insurance and the tax code and have testified more recently as well. In addition, over the past year in connection with my economic analysis work for HHS, I have worked closely with the staffs of both the Senate Finance and the Senate HELP Committees in evaluating various health care reform proposals and assessing how such proposals might be scored by the Congressional Budget Office.

To the best of my recollection, during the course of my health care reform work with Congress, no Member or staffer ever asked me whether I held any government contracts. Given that the staff saw the time that I was devoting to this effort, in retrospect, I suppose I assumed they understood I was being paid for that work. Both my congressional testimony and the health care opinion pieces that I have authored reflect my longstanding policy views -- and were in no way influenced by my contracts with HHS, which related to technical economic modeling designed to determine the costs of various health care reform policy options. It certainly did not occur to me that anyone would view my HHS contracts as relevant to my independent, long-held opinions regarding the economics of health care reform. I regard the contract work I performed for HHS and my public speaking and writing as being independent and unrelated. But I do recognize the public interest in these disclosure issues and will certainly consider them in the context of future appearances on the Hill or in the media.

Thank you for your work on these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jonathan Gruber".

Jonathan Gruber