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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025

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May 10, 2006

The Honorable Kenneth M. Donohue
Inspector General
Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th St. SW
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Inspector General Donohue:

Like many of my colleagues in the House and Senate, I am deeply concerned about the recent comments attributed to Secretary Jackson as reported on May 5, 2006, in the *Dallas Business Journal* entitled "HUD Secretary's Blunt Warning."

Secretary Jackson's comments, if reported accurately, send a message to anyone that is currently doing business with HUD or anyone who wishes to do so in the future that they must openly support the President if they are to be successful competitors for HUD grants and/or contracts.

Federal government contracts are required to be awarded solely based on merit, taking into consideration the value returned to the taxpayer and the ability and experience of the competing contractors. No political affiliation or activity may legally be considered. HUD is responsible for administering billions of taxpayer's dollars in the most cost effective manner. Failure to do so ultimately damages the agency's mission to serve low- and moderate- income families and communities. I am asking that you answer the following questions in an expedited manner:

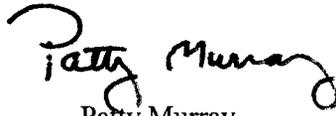
- 1) Is the reporting of the comments attributed to the Secretary on May 5, 2006, as reported in the *Dallas Business Journal* accurate?
- 2) Did the circumstances described by the Secretary actually take place?
- 3) Even if they did not take place, does the public articulation by a cabinet officer of such a message indicating a pattern and practice of political favoritism at his agency constitute a violation of law or regulation?

More generally, I ask that you thoroughly review not just this individual incident but the overall practices at HUD to determine whether political favoritism has played any role in awarding grants and/or contracts by the Secretary or any of his subordinates?

The Honorable Kenneth M. Donohue
May 10, 2006
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I thank you for your assistance in responding to this request in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patty Murray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury,
the Judiciary, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies

Attachment