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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET  
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CO-CHAIR  
AFFORDABLE MEDICINES TASK FORCE  
CO-CHAIR

November 21, 2006

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

I am writing to ask that you rescind the appointment of Dr. Eric Keroack to the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population Affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Dr. Keroack's past professional experience raises serious doubts about his ability to objectively administer the important mission of this office. Furthermore, the appointment of Dr. Keroack by the Administration signals an unwillingness to execute the Title X Family Planning Program as required by statute, and reflects the Administration's disturbing pattern of subverting scientific and medical interests to ideological aims.

The Office of Population Affairs (OPA) administers grant programs established by the Title X Family Planning Program. By law, those programs are required to "offer a broad range of acceptable and effective family planning methods and services."<sup>1</sup> The program is designed to provide "access to contraceptive supplies and information to all who want and need them with priority given to low-income persons." It offers "a broad range of effective and acceptable family planning methods and related preventive health services," including breast and cervical cancer screening, HIV counseling and screening, and pregnancy tests and counseling.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately prior to his appointment, Dr. Keroack served as medical director for a network of clinics in Massachusetts. Materials provided by the network to patients included false information, including an unscientifically supported claim that abortions significantly increase the risk of breast cancer.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Title 42 USC, § 300

<sup>2</sup> Office of Population Affairs, Office of Family planning, HHS (<http://opa.osophs.dhhs.gov/titlex/ofp.html>)

<sup>3</sup> A Woman's Concern, *Considering Abortion?* ([http://awomansconcern.com/considering\\_abortion.htm](http://awomansconcern.com/considering_abortion.htm))

Dr. Keroack's network, as a matter of policy, completely opposed the use of contraceptive drugs or devices. Network staff were prohibited from distributing materials that advocated or promoted the use of contraception as a family planning option, even to married couples.<sup>4</sup>

A person who has overseen the distribution of inaccurate information about women's reproductive health is not qualified to administer a federal program required by law to provide accurate information on women's reproductive health. A person who was medical director for an organization that refused to provide contraception or referrals for contraception is not qualified to oversee a federal program that provides birth control to American women, as part of its mandate to offer access to a wide range of family planning methods and services.

In Maine, Title X funds help support a statewide network of 40 planning clinics providing high quality, low-cost contraceptive care to more than 30,000 Maine women and teens. Maine has the highest rate of oral contraceptive use among the state's sexually active teens, although Maine teens are no more sexually active than teens in other states. Maine has the fifth lowest teen pregnancy rate, and the lowest pregnancy rate among 14-year-olds and younger, in the nation. Our State has seen a 40 percent decline in its abortion rate over the last 10 years.

This progress is due to a collaborative relationship between HHS's Office of Population Affairs and the statewide grantee, working toward the common goal of reducing the incidence of unintended pregnancy through a comprehensive approach to family life, human sexuality education, and widespread access throughout the state to effective family planning methods. Given his background, Dr. Keroack's appointment could put these notable accomplishments at risk.

I urge you to withdraw the appointment of Dr. Keroack and appoint someone to the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population Affairs who is qualified to carry out the mission of the office and earn the trust of women and families who depend on the Title X program.

Sincerely,



Tom Allen  
Member of Congress

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<sup>4</sup> A Woman's Concern, *Policy on Contraception and "Emergency Contraception"*  
([http://partners.awomansconcern.org/images/misc/birth\\_control\\_policy.pdf](http://partners.awomansconcern.org/images/misc/birth_control_policy.pdf))