# Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2005

The Honorable Wally Herger
Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources
House Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Jim Ramstad
Chairman, Subcommittee on Oversight
House Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Herger and Chairman Ramstad,

We read with great concern this morning's *Washington Post* article titled "Writer Backing Bush Plan Had Gotten Federal Contract." The article indicates that Maggie Gallagher, a syndicated newspaper columnist whose articles appear throughout the nation, received a federal contract from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) worth $21,500 and subsequently opined in a column her support for President Bush's plan to use taxpayer dollars to promote marriage. We ask that you schedule hearings to examine this case and to assess whether there are additional examples of the Bush Administration, especially HHS, using taxpayer funds for covert propaganda designed to mislead the American public.

Just last year, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) determined that HHS illegally used taxpayer money to produce what the GAO called "propaganda" fraudulently disguised as television journalism to promote the Republican prescription drug program administered by HHS. We also learned last year that federal money disbursed by HHS to promote abstinence-only sex education was used to distribute materials to young people that were medically inaccurate and misleading. Furthermore, we recently learned that the Department of Education disbursed $241,000 in taxpayer money to another syndicated journalist, Armstrong Williams, who was paid for his support of President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" program.

Clearly, there is a troubling pattern emerging from the Bush Administration and within HHS resulting in the misleading of America and the waste of taxpayer dollars. As Members of

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Congress whose committee assignments make us responsible for the oversight of HHS, we have a duty to investigate these issues. Whether in the Oversight Subcommittee or Human Resources Subcommittee, we hope to work with you to resolve these ongoing problems with respect to the Bush Administration's improper use of taxpayer funds.

Sincerely,

Jim McDermott
Ranking Member, Human Resources Subcommittee
House Committee on Ways and Means

Pete Stark
Ranking Member, Health Subcommittee
House Committee on Ways and Means

John Lewis
Ranking Member, Oversight Subcommittee
House Committee on Ways and Means