

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2101

June 1, 2007

The Honorable Margaret Spellings  
Secretary, US Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Spellings:

I'm writing to express my concern about the way certain Upward Bound programs were denied consideration for funding because of a computer problem within the Department of Education, which forced their applications to be received late.

Specifically, the issue was brought to my attention by the Choice Thru Education Program (Choice) in Chelsea, MA who ran into a problem submitting their proposal via Grants.gov. As I'm sure you are aware, the site was down on the Saturday and Sunday prior to the deadline when Choice first sent the complete proposal. They received a receipt stating that the application had been received even though it had not. Choice has acknowledged that they were warned to confirm on Monday that the proposal had been received. Choice tried repeatedly on Monday morning and finally got through, discovering that the site had gone down on Friday and applications had not been received. DOE then extended the deadline until the following Tuesday. Meanwhile Choice, once again, submitted the proposal electronically and it failed to go through.

On Tuesday, Choice tried a dozen times to submit their proposal. The extension granted by the Department of Education did not say when on Tuesday the Department would stop accepting proposals, and the Choice proposal was finally logged in at 5:16pm. As you know, the proposal was then denied review by the Department of Education because of late submission.

TRIO programs have an important role in many communities throughout Massachusetts. Each year, Upward Bound offers enrichment, mentoring and year-round support services to hundreds of students throughout the Commonwealth and a program of this sort would fill a critical need in the City of Chelsea.

I appreciate the difficulty of making these funding decisions, and I know that the grant process is very competitive. However, constituents, and the students they serve, should not be penalized because of computer errors that are beyond their control. I urge you to reconsider the consideration of funds, particularly for those that had problems submitting their applications because of computer errors on the part of Department of Education contractors.

With respect and appreciation,

Sincerely,



Edward M. Kennedy

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