United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 22, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell,

We are deeply disturbed by recent footage released by the Center for Medical Progress depicting senior Planned Parenthood Federation of America executives discussing in graphic detail the organization's practice of harvesting the organs of unborn babies.

The footage raises a number of questions about the practices of the organization, including whether they are in compliance with federal laws regulating both the use of fetal tissue and partial-birth abortions.

In addition to questions about Planned Parenthood's compliance with applicable federal law and medical ethics, we believe the footage prompts important policy questions surrounding the issue of abortions permitted so late in a pregnancy – sometimes even later than 5 months – that an unborn baby's organs can be identified and harvested.

Congress is undertaking efforts to address these questions, and we expect the Department of Health and Human Services to fully cooperate with ensuing investigations – including future requests for information and hearing participation. To that end, we further expect the immediate preservation of any and all Department electronic and paper records that could have any relevance to any ongoing or forthcoming lawful investigation.

It is our understanding that, to date, you have refrained from commenting on the questions raised by the footage until you can review the matter further. We appreciate your acknowledgement that this matter requires further examination, and upon your receipt of this letter, we request that you confirm in writing that you have either commenced or will immediately initiate a thorough internal review of the compliance of the Department and Planned Parenthood – one of the Department's grantees – with all relevant and applicable federal statutes, regulations, and other requirements. Please also include a description of the expected scope of the internal review, as well as an estimated completion date.

We look forward to future correspondence on this matter, and we hope that we can count on you as a key partner in our efforts to address the various legal, ethical, and policy concerns raised by the information contained in the footage.

Sincerely,

Joni K. Ernst

Roy Blunt

Thom Tillis

Mitch McConnell

John Boozman

Rob Portman

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Ben Sasse

M. Michael Rounds

Jerry Moran

John McCain

Tim Scott

Tom Cotton

Pat Toomey

John Hoeven

Kelly A. Ayotte

Rand Paul

Mike Rounds

Richard Shelby

Thom Tillis

Bill Cassidy, M.D.

Dan Sullivan

David Vitter

Ron Johnson

Jim Risch

Steve Daines

Roger Wicker

Bob Corker

Mike Crapo

Ted Cruz

Jeff Sessions

David A. Perdue

Dan Coats

Shelley Moore Capito

Cory Dunbar

Thad Cochran

Joe Manchester

Jeff Flake

Jim E Risch

Lawrence Auxarden