

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 1) –Led by U.S. Representatives Martha Roby and Terri A. Sewell, Alabama’s Congressional delegation today wrote Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to highlight ongoing efforts to support Alabama’s education system and to request a meeting between the secretary and the delegation.

The bipartisan letter comes after a delegation meeting with Governor Robert Bentley and the Alabama State Board of Education last week in Montgomery. At the meeting, board members stressed the importance of speaking to the Secretary about the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, federal special education rules, and funding for workforce training programs.

"I strongly believe that our local teachers and school administrators are best suited to make decisions about educating our children, and it was a pleasure to meet with the Board of Education to discuss the challenges that we face," Roby, a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, said. "I am pleased that the delegation is working to communicate their concerns to those in the federal government, and to facilitate a direct meeting between Alabama leaders and government officials."

"As a product of public schools and the daughter of two educators, I know firsthand the difference that a strong education can make," said Rep. Sewell. "It can make all the difference in achieving the American Dream, because getting a good education can overcome differences in background, culture, and privilege. Strengthening our education system will require a bi-partisan effort, and I look forward to working with the Alabama State Board of Education, my colleagues in the House and Senate and the U.S. Department of Education to identify innovative solutions to allow our children to compete locally and globally."

In addition to Roby and Sewell, signatories to the letter include Reps. Spencer Bachus, Jo Bonner, Mo Brooks, Robert Aderholt, and Mike Rogers. □ *Congressman Bachus held a roundtable with education professionals and attendees from the 6*

th
District in Hoover on January 27

Below is a copy of the letter sent to Secretary Duncan today.

March 31, 2011

The Honorable Arne Duncan

Secretary

U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

On Thursday, March 24, members of the Alabama Congressional delegation participated in a special meeting with Governor Robert Bentley and the State Board of Education to discuss the future of the state's education system and the impact of federal education policies on Alabama's schools. As you know, Congress and the Administration have begun to discuss how best to reform our education system. We share the common goal of working toward a system that prepares our students to be competitive locally and globally. Our delegation would like to meet with you to discuss our shared vision and how to strengthen education in America.

Specifically, the delegation would like to discuss issues including the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, federal special education regulations, Career and Technical Education Maintenance of Effort Requirements, and Race to the Top Funding.

Additionally, we request your immediate attention to the pending Alabama Department of Education waiver request concerning the SFY 2010 State's Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement for Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Alabama State Superintendent Joseph Morton submitted this request to Dr. Ruth Ryder, U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, on November 12, 2010. According to officials from the State Board of Education, if the waiver is denied, Alabama will lose federal funding for workforce training programs. Given the current economic challenges that our state and nation face, the potential loss of such funding would be detrimental.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service on behalf of America's schools. It is our hope to be able to schedule a meeting at the earliest date of mutual convenience.

#