



April 14, 2015

Mr. William Knudsen and Ms. Lindsay Fryer
U. S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Bill and Lindsay,

I follow Senator Alexander on Twitter, and am very encouraged about the progress in bipartisan and much-needed reform of the No Child Left Behind legislation. The Every Child Achieves Act seems to be getting better 140 characters at a time! There are still some amendments that I would very much like to see Senator Alexander support. Most significantly, the bipartisan amendment offered by Senators Al Franken (D-MN), Mark Kirk (R-NC), and Patty Murray (D-WA), that would provide dedicated support to every state for STEM activities.

This amendment is very important to me for two reasons. First, as a Professor of Chemistry at Middle Tennessee State University, I know that students who come to college with a passion for science have a much better success rate, no matter what their final major may be. Science stimulates creative and critical thinking, and there's no better way to prepare for college.

Secondly, in my scarce free time, I am the Director of the Tennessee Junior Academy of Science (TJAS). This organization, started in 1942 with money allocated from Senator Al Gore Sr's "Milk Fund" (a secret fund for increasing science education to provide a local workforce for then-new Oak Ridge National Laboratory) is one of the oldest in the country! The TJAS is a private, self-sufficient institution, but the Franken-Kirk-Murray amendment will benefit the über-talented high school students from across the state who contribute papers based on their independent research. We would *love* to have Senator Alexander visit our annual meeting either this year (April 17th at Belmont University in Nashville), or maybe for our 75th meeting in 2017.

If you have any questions, I can be contacted by E-mail at pmacdougall@mtsu.edu, phone at 615-898-5265, or fax at 615-898-5182 or cell phone 615-542-0470.

Very Sincerely,

Preston MacDougall, Director
Tennessee Junior Academy of Science