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July 17, 2013

Grace Lewis
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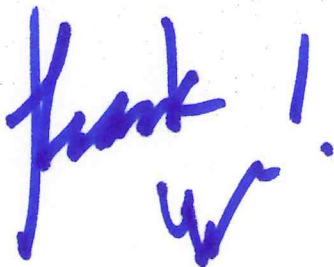
Dear Mrs. Lewis:

Thank you for contacting me regarding the Arkansas State Legislature's hearing on the Common Core State Standards Initiative (Common Core) that is scheduled to take place on July 22, 2013. I appreciate you reaching out to me and am happy to provide you with my position on Common Core.

Common Core was supposed to be an optional, state-led effort to establish educational standards for our nation's schools. However, this Administration has manipulated Common Core to coerce our state education agencies to implement a one-size-fits-all approach to our nation's education system, through the provision of federal Race to the Top grant funds. The President, through the U.S. Department of Education, established the Race to the Top Competition in 2009 to provide more than \$4 billion to states to improve student performance. However, in order to be considered for the Race to the Top grants, states were strongly encouraged to enact specific "reforms" preferred by the President's Administration. Arkansas officially adopted Common Core in July 2010, after the announcement of the new Race to the Top program, and I believe that many states felt coerced to adopt Common Core and more than 100 other prescriptive federal requirements in order to compete for Race to the Top grants.

I remain concerned with the federal influence over the adoption of Common Core, and that is why I am pleased that the House of Representatives plans to take up reform to the Education and Secondary Education Act, H.R. 5, the Student Success Act. Among other necessary reforms to our nation's education system, H.R. 5 would eliminate the ability of the federal government to coerce or incentivize states to adopt Common Core and eliminates the Race to the Top grant program. I will continue to work to ensure the important decisions about the education of our nation's school children are made by our state and local communities without the unnecessary intrusion of the federal government.

Again, thank you for contacting me about this important issue. If you need any additional assistance or have any questions or concerns regarding my position on Common Core, please contact Peter Comstock in my Washington, D.C. office at (202) 225-2506 or at Peter.Comstock@mail.house.gov.



Sincerely,



Tim Griffin
Member of Congress