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**Governor Sean Parnell**  
**STATE OF ALASKA**

August 21, 2012

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary  
US Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

I am very concerned by the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Information Memorandum released on July 12<sup>th</sup> detailing HHS' intention to allow states to waive welfare work requirements under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF). I firmly believe that by granting these waivers, HHS has overreached its authority and will in effect create a dangerous policy precedent and deter Americans from becoming more self-sufficient.

In 1996 when the original social welfare programs were being crafted to replace the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC), governors of both parties were consulted. The resulting law has been the cornerstone of innovative and state specific welfare-to-work programs. Alaska's program is structured and managed to successfully assist TANF families to again become self-sufficient and meet the obligations of the program while ensuring higher work participation rates clearly mandated in federal regulation. I continue to believe these original objectives need to be preserved in the TANF program if we are to help our low income families build a better life for themselves and their children.

We and many other states have advocated for flexibility in the HHS managed welfare programs, most recently the Medicaid program, but this Informational Memorandum regarding TANF goes beyond any original request for flexibility. The existing work requirement should remain intact and any TANF reauthorization proposal should incentivize personal accountability to move from welfare to work.

I am hopeful that you will reassess your intention to waive the TANF work requirements and further engage with Congress and all Governors to find workable welfare solutions in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean Parnell".

Sean Parnell  
Governor

cc: The Honorable William Streur, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services