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December 21, 2011

The Honorable Hilda Solis
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Solis:

On December 19, 2011, the *Carolina Journal* reported what appears to be a potential unauthorized release of unemployment numbers gathered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).¹ The accusation was based on a review of emails between the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina and North Carolina Governor Beverly Purdue's office. The emails contain BLS statewide unemployment data for the private sector, state, and municipal governments. The data is referred to in detail by the two entities in press releases prepared prior to the authorized release of this information by BLS.

BLS has implemented various security protocols to ensure the integrity of this data and prevent its inappropriate release. It is my understanding that data is shared with states, but cooperative agreements with each state limit when the information may be released. Congress has implemented strong penalties to deter and punish early release of this data, including the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act.² Furthermore, it is my understanding that even you, as Secretary of Labor, receive this information 30 minutes prior to its release. Outside of BLS, only White House personnel receive comprehensive data further in advance.

To ensure BLS data is not being shared for political gain prior to the authorized release date, I request you provide the following information by January 4, 2011:

1. A description of DOL and BLS protocols for the gathering, sharing, and release of unemployment data;

¹ "Perdue Media Team Used Confidential Data To Spin Jobs Reports." *Carolina Journal*, December 19, 2011.

² P. L. 107-347

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2. An outline of any changes that have been made during your tenure as Secretary of Labor with respect to sharing and disseminating BLS data;
3. The date on which you were made aware of concerns about the potential unauthorized release of BLS data to political officials in North Carolina and outline the actions have you initiated in response;
4. A copy of North Carolina's cooperative agreement with BLS;
5. All documents and communications relating to the potential unauthorized release of BLS data to political officials in North Carolina; and
6. All documents and communications between DOL agencies and the State of North Carolina relating to unemployment data.

If your staff has any questions regarding this request, please contact Joe Wheeler or Loren Sweatt of the committee staff at 202-225-7101.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Kline".

JOHN KLINE
Chairman