

Submitted by Mr. Hunter



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President, Prime Management
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Member Services*

June 20, 2011

RE: H.R. 2218, Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act

Dear Chairman Kline and Subcommittee Chairman Hunter:

On behalf of the over 390 Texas charter school members educating more than 100,000 students, the Texas Charter Schools Association (TCSA) supports H.R. 2218, the Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act.

Like other states, Texas does not provide direct facilities aid to its open-enrollment charter schools and charter schools cannot levy local property taxes. State-wide, there are approximately 120,000 students enrolled in charter schools with 56,000 more on waiting lists. The demand for charter schools strongly exists in Texas, the facilities in which to educate these students do not. The grants that H.R. 2218 would provide in credit enhancement initiatives is a much needed component that will help high-quality charter schools meet the demand of parents and students.

TCSA appreciates the provisions that authorize the expansion and replication of high-quality charter schools that address the needs of at-risk and underserved populations. According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Texas charter schools deliver strong results, demonstrating higher student achievement on state assessment tests and lower percentages of drop-outs than traditional public schools for African-American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students. Additionally, at-risk students in charter schools recently showed the largest gains in state assessment test passage rates. H.R. 2218 will help ensure that charter schools continue to deliver proven results with these population groups.

Your efforts on the Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act are a step in the right direction. However, it should be noted that TCSA has concerns regarding the language in Section 5 (f)(2)(B) of the bill which prioritizes states which do not "impose any limitation on the number or percentage of charter schools that may exist." Such language may impede Texas from participating in this much needed grant program. While the Texas statutory cap of 215 limits the number of open-enrollment charter holders, the TEA has worked with charter holders to streamline the replication and expansion process for high-quality charter schools. This has allowed

charter schools to grow to 463 charter school campuses in Texas. Therefore, while Texas has a statutory cap, the charter school movement is energized and continues to grow.

Public charter schools play a critical role in Texas' public education system and we thank you for your leadership in promoting the expansion of high-quality charter schools as well as encouraging states to provide support to charter schools for facilities financing. We look forward to working with you and Congress on this important piece of education reform legislation as it continues to move through the process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Dunn".

David Dunn

Executive Director

Texas Charter Schools Association

newschools
venture fund

June 21, 2011

The Honorable John Kline, Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Duncan Hunter, Chairman
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary
& Secondary Education
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Subcommittee Chairman Hunter:

We are pleased to support H.R. 2218, the Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act.

In particular, we appreciate the important provisions that the Committee has included to allow for the funding of expansion grants to existing schools, continued support for funding charter schools facilities, and making important improvements to the accountability and transparency provisions of the Federal charter schools program. We also are pleased by the renewed attention to improving the quality of charter authorizers, which we believe is critical to improving the performance of charter schools in improving student academic achievement.

In addition, we are particularly thankful for the inclusion of language to ensure that the Secretary gives priority to funding States that partner with intermediary organizations to expand the capacity of States to support the development of high-quality charter schools. As successful, single-site charter schools look to expand capacity and grow to scale, we think that their chances of success are strongest when they receive support from organizations with a strong track record providing a program of investment and management assistance to help them expand and replicate the number of high-quality charter school campuses. We look forward to continuing to work with your staff to ensure this legislative intent is preserved in the bill.

Finally, we appreciate the fact that the Committee has included an authorization level of \$300 million for the first year of funding for the charter school program. We are concerned, however, that this program is "level funded" for the five year period of the authorization, and potentially longer if the next reauthorization does not proceed as scheduled. Unfortunately this could put a "cap" on the growth of Federal support for the charter sector at the very time when Federal, State, and local governments are encouraging its expansion. We hope that efforts are made to raise the out year authorization levels in the bill to keep alive the hope that additional funding can be found in future years. And, we also urge you to increase the support for national activities, as the charter movement needs national charter operators to provide evidence of success in multiple cities with varying demographics.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and for your support of high-quality charter schools.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell
Chief Executive Officer

cc: The Honorable George Miller

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National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.

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June 21, 2011

Representative John Kline
Chairman, House Education and Workforce Committee
2257 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC. 20515

Representative George Miller
Ranking Member, House Education and Workforce Committee
H2-230 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC. 20515

Representative Duncan Hunter
Chairman, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education
House Education and Workforce Committee
223 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Miller and Rep. Hunter:

On behalf of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), which represents the state directors of special education in the states, federal territories, the Department of Defense Education Agency and the Freely Associated States, I write in support of H.R. 2218, the Empowering Parents Through Quality Charter Schools Act.

We are pleased that this bill will protect access to charter schools for students with disabilities. Charter schools can be a valuable educational option for students with disabilities, and we are encouraged by the steps Congress is taking to ensure that their needs are met.

NASDSE believes that the monitoring and technical assistance that the bill calls for will help provide access to charter schools for all students, including those with disabilities and will help charter school authorizers and operators understand the commitment that they must make to ensuring that students with disabilities have access to a free, appropriate public education in a charter school, if that is the choice made by the student and his/her family.

NASDSE has a long history of working with states, charter school authorizers and operators, providing technical assistance to help them understand their responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We are currently working with the federally funded National Charter Schools Resource Center to provide guidance on the inclusion of students with disabilities in charter schools. This legislation will serve to enhance and ensure that more guidance and technical assistance is provided.

We look forward to working with you on the implementation of this important legislation as states and local communities seek to expand the availability of charter school options.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill East".

Bill East, Ed.D.
Executive Director



nacsa
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS

June 21, 2011

Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Duncan Hunter
Chairman, Subcommittee on Early
Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable George Miller
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Dale Kildee
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Kline and Hunter and Ranking Members Miller and Kildee:

As a strong proponent of quality charter schools, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) supports H.R. 2218, the "Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act," which will improve the quality of charter school authorizing.

Across the country, charter school authorizers are the agencies that approve and monitor charter schools and determine which charter schools are performing well enough to stay open.

We have learned from experience and analysis that authorizers can have a significant impact on the quality of charter schools in their cities and states. Some places have strong authorizing agencies in place and a strong, growing charter school sector. Other cities and states have weak authorizing in place and too many weak charter schools. Unfortunately, too little attention has been paid to the work of authorizers.

NACSA supports H.R. 2218 because, for the first time ever, funds are reserved within the federal Charter Schools Program to strengthen authorizing throughout the country. H.R. 2218 also requires states that receive grants to work with charter schools and their authorizers to ensure that schools meet their obligations to students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

We look forward to continuing to work with Congress to put in place firm assurances that would require charter schools receiving federal grants to have basic quality control standards in place which protect the interests of the schools, students and taxpayers. These standards include a detailed legal contract with its authorizer; independent, annual financial audits; and defined academic and operational performance standards.

Thousands of charter schools have provided a quality education to millions of students over the past two decades. Indeed, the charter school movement has enjoyed significant bipartisan support, including from each Republican and Democratic nominee for President since 1996. Yet there remains room for improvement.

Too many children across America still do not have access to a quality school. While there are many excellent charter schools, there are also too many failing charter schools. By strengthening charter school authorizing, H.R. 2218 will support the growth in both the number and quality of charter schools while also ensuring that charter schools are open to and serve all students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Greg Richmond".

President & CEO

DEMOCRATS *for* EDUCATION REFORM

June 21, 2011

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
2181 Rayburn, HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Duncan Hunter
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Early Childhood, Elementary and
Secondary Education
223 Cannon, HOB
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The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Democrat
Committee on Education and the Workforce
2205 Rayburn, HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dale Kildee
Ranking Democrat
Early Childhood, Elementary,
and Secondary Education
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Kline and Hunter and Ranking Members Miller and Kildee:

Democrats for Education Reform strongly supports the *Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act* (H.R. 2218) that will be marked up Wednesday in Full Committee. H.R. 2218 includes important provisions that allow high-quality public charter schools to serve more students and incentivize states to expand and replicate high-performers. The bill also rightly compels states to ensure that public charter schools meet their obligations to English Language Learners and students with disabilities, and makes important improvements with regard to reporting, oversight, and accountability.

We are disappointed that the bill lowers the authorized funding levels for programs under the federal Charter Schools Program from the \$450 million in current law. We do, however, appreciate that the \$300 million authorization in H.R. 2218 is at least higher than the current \$256 million in *actual* funding. While it would take a much higher increase to serve all children across the country who are on charter school waiting lists, we appreciate this small step forward and hope to work with Congress throughout the legislative process to ensure that we do as much as possible to reach our shared goal of giving all parents the choice of sending their child to a high-quality public school.

We do have some additional concerns that we believe should be addressed as the bill makes its way through the legislative process.

Our main concern with H.R. 2218 is in regard to state oversight of charter school quality and

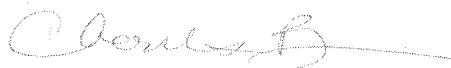
integrity. The bill itself recognizes this issue as it has improving the quality of the charter school authorization process as one of its main goals. We likewise have serious doubts about the ability or willingness of some states to monitor and maintain the quality of charter schools that receive grants through this bill, at least until its provisions take full effect.

For example, in Ohio, long known as the “wild west” of charter school authorizing, Governor Kasich is right now pushing policies that focus mainly on expansion and that allow chronically low-performing charter schools to continue to operate. We are seeing a similar lack of oversight in other states. This is an injustice to children and a disservice to taxpayers, especially in this time of scarce state and local education funding.

It should be remembered that it was the U.S. Congress and President Obama that in 2010 first set aside \$50 million to fund the expansion and replication of high-quality public charter schools. The result is that barely a year later, 76,000 more students attend 127 new and 31 expanded public charter schools in a dozen charter school networks nation-wide. In contrast, there is nothing in HR 2218 that really requires any state to pay much more than lip service to high-quality charter expansion and replication. We hope that, as the bill moves forward, Congress reconsiders the possibility of maintaining the national competition approach given it demonstrated success and integrity.

Also, while we are strong supporters of high-quality charter schools, we do not believe that they are the only or primary means for ensuring that every child in the U.S has the opportunity to a high-quality education. In fact, we think game-changing, systemic reform can only come about through a combination of strategies that include: raising academic standards, improving assessments, overhauling teacher preparation, establishing rigorous teacher evaluation policies, reforming tenure, and providing bonus pay to teachers who teach in high need schools and subjects and rewarding those who are most effective in educating the most at-risk students. It is for these reasons that we are disappointed in the House’s slow pace on reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind. After more than 9 years of inaction, we urge you to redouble your efforts to comprehensively update and modernize federal education policy via a full ESEA/NCLB reauthorization bill before the end of the 112th Congress.

Sincerely,



Charles Barone, DFER Director of Federal Policy

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

1615 H STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000
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June 21, 2011

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Miller:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, supports H.R. 2218, the "Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act," which would improve the Federal government's support of charter schools.

The Chamber believes that dramatically improving the performance of the K-12 education system in the United States is essential to providing a strong foundation for both U.S. competitiveness and for individuals to succeed. Public charter schools are one of the most promising education reform innovations of the last several decades. Charter schools provide much needed options for parents and allow greater flexibility to innovate and improve student performance. With more than 1.5 million children attending nearly 5,000 charter schools in 40 states, charter schools provide choices to disadvantaged students who were formerly trapped in schools with few options to access a better education.

The bill would encourage the removal of state charter caps; authorize funding for expansion grants to high performing charter schools; and continue the Federal role in supporting charter schools facilities, which is the biggest barrier to entry for those seeking to organize new charters. This bill would also improve the program's accountability and transparency provisions and encourage states to aid education entrepreneurs who are seeking to support the charter school movement. The bill advances these priorities in a fiscally responsible manner.

The Chamber urges the Committee to report this important legislation to the full House as expeditiously as practicable.

Sincerely,



Bruce Josten

cc: The Members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce

 Charter School
Lenders' Coalition

1050 Connecticut Ave, NW | 10th Floor | Washington, DC 20036

June 20, 2011

Representative John Kline
Chairman, House Committee on
Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Duncan Hunter
Chairman, House Subcommittee Early
Childhood, Elementary and
Secondary Education
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Subcommittee Chairman Hunter:

On behalf of the Charter School Lenders Coalition*, I want to thank you for your leadership in promoting educational opportunities for disadvantaged communities through the replication of high-performing public charter schools. We believe your proposed legislation, H.R. 2218, the "Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act," would provide essential tools and resources to address the dire need for quality education for low-income students.

In particular, we are grateful that your proposed legislation includes provisions to address the capital funding gaps that public charter schools face. As you well know, one of the most recognized barriers to the growth of public charter schools is the access to private capital to ensure quality facilities, particularly to arrange acquisition and development funding for facilities. Your bill ensures at least 15% of the total appropriation for public charter schools will be available for facilities, including the highly successful Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities Program at the U.S. Department of Education. This will go a long way in helping public charter schools address the capital funding gap, as well as strengthen the public-private partnerships between the schools and the mission-driven organizations that provide these capital resources.

Thank you again for your commitment to our nation's children and your leadership in striving to give our students the best possible education and learning opportunities.

Sincerely,

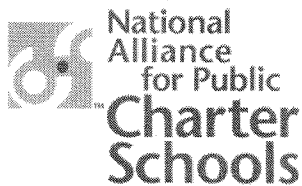


Corey Carlisle

Chair, Charter School Lenders Coalition

Cc: Mandy Schaumburg, professional staff, House Committee on Education and the Workforce

* The Charter School Lenders Coalition is an unincorporated advocacy and information sharing collaborative that brings together mission driven, community development practitioners who are currently providing capital to charter schools in low-income communities.



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June 21, 2011

Representative John Kline
Chairman
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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Duncan Hunter
Chairman, Subcommittee on Early
Childhood, Elementary and Secondary
Education, Education and the
Workforce Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Representative George Miller
Ranking Member
Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Dale Kildee
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Early
Childhood, Elementary and Secondary
Education, Education and the
Workforce Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Kline, Hunter, Miller and Kildee:

On behalf of more than 1.8 million children attending the 5,000 public charter schools across the country, the charter school community thanks you for your leadership in promoting more high-quality public charter school options for families and students nationwide. Your introduction of H.R. 2218, the Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act, brings to House consideration a significant reauthorization proposal that has the support of the charter school movement. This legislation provides the much-needed resources to help high-achieving charter schools overcome the myriad of obstacles that prevent them from growing to serve thousands more students. It streamlines the programs to improve and bring efficiency to the grant process and focuses on quality practices so charter schools continue to be models of operational and academic success for the public education system.

Specifically, H.R. 2218 authorizes the expansion and replication of top-performing charter schools that address the needs of at-risk and underserved students. Charter schools will have the opportunity to continue practices proven to deliver results and expand innovations designed to meet the needs of 21st century learners. The Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act will also drive the next generation of state policies around quality and accountability for all parties involved in the chartering process. The legislation's focus on improving and supporting the practices of charter authorizers will prompt states to recognize that there are many parties that affect the quality of public charter schools—and all should all be held accountable for their performance.

Moreover, H.R. 2218 will provide grants to create innovative credit enhancement initiatives that assist charter schools with addressing the cost of acquiring, constructing and renovating facilities. The legislation will also provide funds to help states establish or enhance and administer per-pupil facilities aid programs for public charter schools.

As Congressional efforts continue on the reauthorization of the Charter School Programs, your proposal represents a significant contribution to shaping the debate. It should be noted however that there are significant concerns with capping authorization levels and potentially stifling growth of the programs in the forthcoming years. We look forward to working with Congress to address this concern as the legislation moves through the process. For now, the public charter school movement stands ready to back this cause and to lend our support for H.R. 2218, the Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act.

Sincerely,

American Federation for Children
Arizona Charter Schools Association
Aspire Public Schools
Charter School Lenders Coalition
Democracy Builders
Democracy Prep Public Schools
Democrats for Education Reform
Green Dot Public Schools
IDEA Public Schools
K12. Inc.
Mastery Charter Schools Network
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
NewSchools Venture Fund
Success Charter Network
Texas Charter School Association
Uncommon Schools

cc: U.S. Secretary Arne Duncan
Members of the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee
Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions



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June 21, 2011

RE: Support Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 2218

Dear Member of the House Education and Workforce Committee:

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the largest professional organization of teachers, administrators, parents, and others concerned with the education of children with disabilities, gifts and talents, or both, is writing to ask you to **vote yes on the Substitute Amendment to H.R. 2218**, the amendment to the *Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act*.

CEC has long been concerned by the lack of access for students with disabilities to charter schools and the lack of oversight ensuring that students with disabilities in charter schools are appropriately served and receive all of their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). CEC is pleased to see several provisions within the original bill and the Substitute which would support increased access, service and accountability for these schools. Specifically, CEC is encouraged to see the following:

- A requirement that State entities describe in their applications how they will ensure charters can meet the educational needs of students with disabilities;
- An assurance that State entities will ensure authorizing agencies ensure charter schools are meeting the obligations of IDEA and section 504;
- An assurance that State entities will adequately monitor and help charter schools to recruit, enroll, and meet the needs of all students with disabilities; and
- The definition of High Quality Charter School specifically includes schools that have demonstrated success in significantly increasing academic achievement for all students, and specifically students with disabilities.

These provisions represent a step forward for education policy in our nation and an acknowledgement that charter schools must include and do more for students with disabilities.

While CEC supports the overall bill, we are concerned that in the Substitute Amendment the requirement that charter schools enroll students with disabilities and other traditionally underserved populations at a rate similar to traditional public schools has been downgraded to a priority. CEC will continue to work with Congress, the Administration, states and local entities to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are met in all settings.



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This bill is a step in the right direction, but there is still work to be done. **For these reasons, we urge you to support the Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 2218.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah A. Ziegler".

Deborah A. Ziegler
Associate Executive Director
Policy and Advocacy Services
Council for Exceptional Children



Opportunity within the *Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act (H.R. 2218)*

June 17, 2011

The Honorable Duncan Hunter
223 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hunter:

We applaud your aim within the *Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act* to enable successful charter schools to replicate, expand and serve more students. We appreciate that this legislation encourages rigorous levels of reporting, oversight and accountability for charter school authorizers. We would also like to thank you for increasing the reauthorization from \$256M to \$300M. While demand for high quality charter school seats still significantly exceeds supply, we greatly appreciate this step forward and want to work with you through the legislative process to ensure that we do as much as possible to reach our shared goal of giving all parents who want it the choice to send their child to a high quality public school. **However, as you move to mark up this bill we strongly encourage you to incorporate the ability for high quality charter management organizations operating in more than one state to apply directly to the U.S. Department of Education to seek start-up funding.**

The Knowledge Is Power Program ("KIPP") is a national network of free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public schools with a track record of preparing students in underserved communities for success in college and in life. Today, the KIPP network is comprised of 99 schools serving more than 28,000 students in 20 states and the District of Columbia. Currently, nearly as many students are on our waitlists as we are able to educate in our classrooms. To meet this growing demand we aspire to open approximately twenty new schools annually. With your support we are on pace to serve over 60,000 students by 2015.

While the role of the federal government is limited when it comes to the work of our schools, there is one federal program that plays an absolutely unique and catalytic role in supporting our dramatic expansion. That program is the Charter Schools Program which provides grants to plan, design and implement new charter schools, as well as to disseminate information on successful charter schools. *Unfortunately, in 2009, only 6 of KIPP's 18 new schools were able to successfully seek federal Charter Schools Program start-up funding due to a host of state-level barriers to accessing it.*

In FY2010, thanks to the Appropriations Committees' interest in growing high quality public education options, a portion of the Charter Schools Program's funding was designated for the replication and expansion of high-performing charter schools. This is something the federal government had never before supported. This \$50M investment by the Congress has allowed 76,000 more students to attend 127 new and 31 expanded charter schools in a dozen charter school networks nation-wide. To put this figure in

perspective, prior to this grant program's inception, it took some twenty years to create 167,000 high quality charter school seats under the traditional state Charter Schools Program approach.¹

As a current grant recipient of the Charter Schools Program Grants for Replication and Expansion of High quality Charter Schools, this funding is supporting the opening and expansion of over 30 KIPP schools in 14 unique communities in 2010 and 2011. We have great concerns, however, that we will again be unable to access start-up funding to grow if this process is left entirely in the hands of the states as currently proposed within the *Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act*. While the bill has many strengths, it puts the expansion of high performing, multi-state charter school networks at risk.

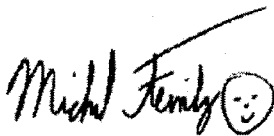
As you move to mark up the *Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act*, we ask that you consider incorporating the opportunity for high quality charter management organizations operating in more than one state to continue to be able to apply directly to the Secretary to replicate and expand. Specifically, we hope you will allow for this competition to continue with ample funding as part of the national activities portion of the bill.

During this difficult economic time when resources are scarce, we are ever-mindful of opportunities to shine a light on measures that will help to ensure that all students have access to a high quality public education. We are confident that helping to drive the expansion of proven high quality charter networks into multiple states is one of the most powerful, catalytic education investments the federal government can make.

Sincerely,



Richard Barth
CEO of KIPP



Mike Feinberg
Co-Founder of KIPP



Dave Levin
Co-Founder of KIPP

cc: U.S. Secretary Arne Duncan
Members of the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee
Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

¹ Public Impact. "Going Exponential: Growing the Charter School Sector's Best." Washington, DC: The Progressive Policy Institute, 2011.



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June 20, 2011

Representative John Kline
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Representative George Miller
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Ivan G. Seidenberg
Verizon Communications
Chairman

Kenneth I. Chenault
American Express Company
Vice Chairman

Edward B. Rust, Jr.
State Farm Insurance
Companies
Vice Chairman

John Engler
President

Larry D. Burton
Executive Director

Johanna I. Schneider
Executive Director,
External Relations

LeAnne Redick Wilson
Executive Director,
Membership

Dear Chairman Kline and Representative Miller:

Business Roundtable, an association of chief executive officers of leading U.S. companies with nearly \$6 trillion in annual revenues and more than 13 million employees, supports H.R. 2218, Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act.

The bill will strengthen the current federal charter school program and increase the number of high-quality charter schools that provide additional options for students and their parents. It also includes an important emphasis on the replication of high-quality models and on sharing best practices with all schools.

We look forward to working with you to update the accountability provisions and other parts of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that affect all public schools, including charters.

Sincerely,

John Engler

JE/st



www.calcharters.org

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June 21, 2011

The Honorable Duncan Hunter
Chair, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
223 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support for Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act (H.R. 2218)

Dear Congressman Hunter:

California is home to 912 charter schools serving more than 365,000 students who are supported by parents, educators and communities; we project another 100 schools to open each year. The California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) supports the foundational concepts of H.R. 2218, the *Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act*. The proposal – one of several planned in the comprehensive overhaul of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) – focuses on amending the charter schools section of the federal law.

We appreciate the acknowledgement that charter schools are providing innovative and viable options in public education, and a modern federal law must include policies that support, encourage and continue the increasing momentum of the charter schools movement. Moreover, a modern federal education law must recognize that both learning and teaching, including educational delivery and evaluation, must also evolve to reflect the advances of technology and information, not only in the power of data to drive effective pedagogy, but the myriad learning styles and needs of students.

We support the inclusion of incentives to support the continued development of high-quality charter models and improvements to the Charter Schools Program that will facilitate improved access to critical funds necessary to replicate and expand innovative and successful charter models able to serve more students currently attending underperforming schools. We appreciate the inclusion of timelines and recourse within H.R. 2218 to encourage and ensure the timely allocation of funds so that charter schools can have the needed infusion of moneys critical for start-up costs, facilities and expansion.

CCSA encourages the inclusion of rigorous levels of reporting and accountability of taxpayer dollars. It is only through high standards and high expectations focused on providing effective learning environments for students that we will close the achievement gap and help all students meet their highest potential.

As Congress further deliberates the reauthorization of the ESEA, inclusion of the charter model as an effective option to create learning environments where both students and teachers thrive, will be critical to ensuring an educational system that is rigorous and robust. CCSA awaits the

series of bills and welcomes the opportunity to provide additional comments on how the individual proposals not only influence the overarching goal of meaningful education reform, but how the amended policies promote and support the replication and expansion of innovative and successful charter school programs.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Bryant
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs

cc: The Honorable John Kline, Chair, House Education and the Workforce Committee
The Honorable George Miller, Ranking Member, House Education and the Workforce Committee
The Honorable Dale Kildee, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education

via electronic transmittal: Members, House Education and the Workforce Committee