



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