



BILL SUMMARY

EDUCATION & THE WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

THE SUCCESS AND OPPORTUNITY THROUGH QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS ACT

The *Success and Opportunity through Quality Charter Schools Act* (H.R. 10) streamlines and modernizes the existing charter school programs under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. There are currently two programs:

- The Charter School Program supports grants for charter school developers to open new charter schools. The program also provides funds to disseminate best practices and provide state facilities aid to charter schools.
- The Charter School Credit Enhancement Program assists charter schools in accessing better credit terms to acquire and renovate facilities to operate a charter school.

The *Success and Opportunity through Quality Charter Schools Act* consolidates the two programs into one, refocuses the new program to promote high-quality charter schools at the state and local level, and allows states to use federal funds to start new charter schools as well as expand and replicate existing high-quality charter schools. Additionally, the bill authorizes a Charter Management Organization (CMO) grant program to support CMO successes in opening quality charter schools nationwide.

The new Charter School Program will consist of three parts:

- Grants to support high-quality charter schools will be awarded to a State Educational Agency, the State Charter School Board, the Governor, or a Charter School Support Organization. The grants will support the expansion and replication of high-quality charter schools, and new, innovative charter school models. Additionally, each state will use a portion of the funding to support quality initiatives aimed toward improving charter school authorizing.
- Facilities Aid will be awarded to continue credit enhancement activities and support state facilities aid for charter schools.
- National Activities will allow the secretary of education to operate a grant competition for charter schools in states that did not win or compete for a state grant and a competition for high quality CMOs. This section also requires the secretary to offer technical assistance to help eligible grantees apply for the grant, as well as to help grantees properly implement the grant. The secretary will also be allowed to disseminate best practices to ensure all public schools may benefit from charter schools' success. Finally, the secretary will conduct an evaluation to examine the effects of the legislation on charter schools, including student achievement.

The *Success and Opportunity through Quality Charter Schools Act* authorizes the Charter School Program at \$300,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2020. The bill also clarifies that state-determined weighted lotteries are permitted under this program and allows

students to continue in the school program of their choice by clarifying students in affiliated charter schools can attend the next immediate grade in that network's school.

Furthermore, H.R. 10 makes technical corrections to other provisions in the Charter School Program, including modifying the definition of a charter school to clarify that a charter school can serve early childhood students as well as postsecondary students. Finally, the legislation adds five new definitions to the law: a charter management organization, a charter support organization, a high-quality charter school; the expansion of a high-quality charter school; and a replicable, high-quality charter school model.

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