



## **Autism National Committee, Inc.**

*A Quarter Century of Social Justice and Autism Advocacy*

www.autcom.org

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March 31, 2014

The Honorable John Kline, Chair  
The Honorable George Miller, Ranking Member  
House Education & Workforce Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: **Charter School Bill**

Dear Congressman Kline & Congressman Miller,

The Autism National Committee is a 23 year old national organization dedicated to advocating for children and adults with autism and related disabilities. We are an organization composed of people with autism; parents of children with autism; professionals; advocates; colleagues and friends.

Thank you for introducing important legislation to amend the charter school program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. We support this bill.

We have been quite concerned about the under-enrollment of children with disabilities in charter schools for a long time. The bill will mandate that charter school authorizers monitor how charter schools recruit and enroll students with disabilities. Importantly, it will require monitoring of how schools plan to retain students once enrolled and their ongoing retention efforts. This will increase retention of students with disabilities and prevent charter schools from excluding them. The bill also includes new requirements that will help charter schools intentionally plan for and consider how they will meet the needs of students with disabilities and how to help them thrive.

Of similar great importance, the bill will continue ESEA's requirement that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and other important civil rights laws will apply to charter schools. Significantly, the bill will further increase protections for people with disabilities by requiring charter schools to adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act. The bill will also ensure that students and parents in charter schools will receive the right to their students records and to privacy of those records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

People with disabilities have contributed so much to America. Students with disabilities have a wealth of potential to succeed and meet high standards, so they can make similar great contributions after finishing school. The Autism National Committee applauds your bipartisan effort to ensure that students with disabilities can be appropriately served in charter schools.

Sincerely,  
Jess Butler  
Congressional Affairs Coordinator  
Autism National Committee

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