

Statement for the Record  
Hearing on H.R. 4330, the *All Students Achieving through Reform Act of 2009*

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Member of Congress

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Chairman Miller and Senior Republican Kline, I thank you for holding this important hearing on maintaining quality in charter schools.

I also thank Representative Jared Polis for his work on the *All Students Achieving through Reform Act of 2009*, or the All-Stars Act. I was very pleased to join him as an original cosponsor.

Throughout my career, both in Lansing and in Washington, I have been an ardent supporter of good public and private schools. I strongly believe that we should work to improve our federal education laws to incentivize more effective schools and options for parents and students.

Charter schools provide Michigan families with an educational choice. Having a choice of quality schools is very important for students' education and for our communities. In fact, I have noticed that parents tend to be quite involved in their

child's education when they choose to live near the school they want their child to attend.

Developing good schools takes work. Officials in my state have spent considerable time and effort in ensuring that public charter schools are effective. According to the Center for Education Reform, Michigan's charter school laws rank the 6<sup>th</sup> strongest in the country. In my state, no other public schools are scrutinized like charters are. Charter authorizers (often state universities) have large staffs that monitor the schools and ensure compliance with lengthy, written performance contracts. Charters keep their contracts if they are academically and fiscally sound, and lose them if they are not. Even more importantly, charter schools are held accountable by parents who are there by choice and can ultimately "vote with their feet" by choosing another school if they are not satisfied.

While there are approximately 240 public charter schools in Michigan, very few serve the high school grades. In 2008, a new public high school charter opened in Grand Rapids, and served 150 students with a waiting list within its first year of operation.

The All-Stars Act would provide federal grant funds to replicate successful charter schools. It also would ensure high levels of charter school authorizer reporting and accountability.

I look forward to hearing from our expert witnesses today, and hope that other members of this Committee will join me in supporting the All-Stars Act.