

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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April 7, 2014

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

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and
the Workforce
U.S. 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 the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, supports H.R. 10, the "Success and Opportunity through Quality Charter Schools Act."

The availability of high-quality human talent is the number-one issue facing businesses today. Business leaders increasingly place improving public education at the top of their list of priorities because they believe the education system in our country fails to produce graduates prepared to compete both locally and in a global economy.

Accordingly, the Chamber has encouraged policymakers to embrace a choice of education options that would provide greater flexibility to parents and encourage schools to be more responsive to community needs and accountable for academic achievement. In particular, the Chamber has asked that Congress develop and implement innovative education initiatives, such as public charter school models, that would provide flexibility in the design and implementation of educational programming, as long as such schools are held accountable for results.

Public charter schools are the fastest growing sector of America's public education system. Currently, there are more than 6,400 public charter schools enrolling over 2.5 million students in forty-two states and the District of Columbia. In addition to increased demand for charter schools, research shows that federal investments in the charter sector are paying off when it comes to results. Since 2010, numerous independent studies have found that students in charter schools do better than their traditional school peers. Most recently, the Center for Research on Educational Outcomes at Stanford University found that charter schools specifically do a better job teaching low income students, minority students, and students who are still learning English than traditional schools. Additionally, separate studies by the Center for Reinventing Public Education and Mathematica Policy Research have found that charter school

students are more likely to graduate from high school, go on to college, stay in college and have higher earnings in early adulthood.

Federal support for the Charter Schools Program has been critical to the charter sector's growth to meet parental demand for educational options. While public charter schools are inherently local, the movement would not have achieved its current success had it not been for the federal Charter Schools Program.

H.R. 10 would help to further promote state and local efforts to develop and expand charter schools; improve charter school authorizing efforts to support the replication and expansion of successful charter models; support the sharing of best practices between public charter schools and traditional public schools; and encourage charter schools to reach out to special populations, including at-risk students, students with disabilities, and English learners.

Thank you for introducing this bipartisan bill to reauthorize the federal Charter Schools Program. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has been at the forefront of efforts to improve K-12 education so that every child is prepared for higher education or productive careers. The Chamber continues to advocate for commonsense reforms of the education system, including support for expanded access to charter schools. We look forward working with you and other Members of the Committee as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "R." and last name "Josten" clearly visible.

R. Bruce Josten

cc: Members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce