



April 1, 2014

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

The Honorable George Miller, Ranking Member  
Education & the Workforce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Miller:

The mission of the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools (NCSECS) is to advocate for students with diverse learning needs to ensure that if they are interested in attending charter schools, they are able to access and thrive in schools designed to enable all students to succeed. NCSECS is writing today to support the introduction of the “Success and Opportunity through Quality Charter Schools Act.” We appreciate your attention [in the bill] toward fostering and promoting innovation in the charter sector that will better support and address the learning needs of students with disabilities. Specifically, the bill now reinforces the importance of:

- Ensuring that students with disabilities are recruited, enrolled and retained at comparable rates to their peers while also ensuring that the bill does not create unintended consequences that can lead to quota-setting or some other flawed methodology that will undermine the goal to include students with a wide range of disabilities being served by charter schools.
- Requiring state entities to include in their application an explanation of how they will work to “meet the needs of students served by such programs, including students with disabilities...” This addition helps place a much needed emphasis on the up-front planning that must occur in order to intentionally and successfully meet the needs of students with disabilities.
- Allowing program grantees the use of weighted lotteries in charter school admissions that comply with state and federal law. NCSECS supports policy that seeks to create a balance of authorizer autonomy with a service-oriented process that will directly benefit students.

These additions to the charter law will help support and reinforce – that after 20 years of innovation and investment in charter schools – there is still a critical need to ensure students with disabilities have equitable access to a quality education and must be supported *and* expected to achieve the same outcomes as other students.

We look forward to working with you as the bill advances through the House.

Sincerely,

Lauren Morando Rhim  
Executive Director