



July 17, 2013

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Education & the Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline:

On behalf of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, thank you for your leadership in promoting growth, accountability and equity for charter schools in H.R. 5, The Student Success Act. We support your efforts to reauthorize the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), as it includes many principles from the National Alliance's reauthorization proposal.

The National Alliance believes that in order for the public charter school sector to grow and continue to produce results through innovation, the reauthorization of ESEA should significantly expand support for both the creation of new charter schools and the replication and expansion of charter schools that have a demonstrated track record of increasing student achievement. At the same time, ESEA reauthorization presents an opportunity to encourage innovation and quality growth on a national scale, and to roll back the encroachment of charter school freedoms that threaten to stifle student outcomes. The Student Success Act takes an important step forward in empowering parents and students to attend a high quality school of their own choosing and eliminates ineffective federal requirements that have done little to improve student outcomes, such as the highly qualified teacher requirements.

We appreciate the change made by the Committee that would require states and LEAs to develop their Title I plans in consultation with charter school leaders, given that leaders of traditional public schools are included in that process. We also appreciate the provision in the Charter School Program protecting the autonomy of charter schools over their personnel. Additionally, we are grateful for the critical addition of charter support organizations to the list of eligible entities for state grants, for reducing the length of sub grants to three years, and for requiring the Secretary of Education to consult with charter school representatives when issuing non-regulatory guidance.

We appreciate that your bill includes the bipartisan Charter Schools Program (CSP) language from H.R. 2218 that was passed in 2011. However, we remain concerned that the bill does not authorize a competitive grant program that allows high-performing charter management organizations (CMOs) to apply directly to the Secretary for the grants set aside for the replication and expansion of successful schools.

The Honorable John Kline

July 17, 2013

Page 2

Since FY2010, CSP Grants for the Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Schools have allowed some of the most promising of charter models that have a proven track record of increasing academic achievement and attainment for all students to scale. We would also like to work with the House and Senate during Conference to ensure that charter schools receive their equitable share of federal formula grants.

Finally, the demand for charter schools far exceeds the supply. The National Alliance estimates that the current demand for available charter school seats exceeded supply by more than 900,000 applications in the 2012-13 school year. We very much appreciate and support the increased authorization for the CSP in HR 5. However, we are concerned that the increase will not correspond with the growth of the movement, and thus restrict the sector's ability to meet parental demand. Thus, we strongly encourage the House to increase the authorization level of the program.

Thank you again for your leadership to reauthorize *ESEA* through H.R. 5.

Sincerely,



Nina Rees

President and CEO