



June 21, 2011

Honorable John Kline  
Chairman  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Duncan Hunter  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Early  
Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable George Miller  
2205 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Dale Kildee  
2107 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Kline and Hunter and Ranking Members Miller and Kildee:

As a strong proponent of quality charter schools, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) supports H.R. 2218, the "Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act," which will improve the quality of charter school authorizing.

Across the country, charter school authorizers are the agencies that approve and monitor charter schools and determine which charter schools are performing well enough to stay open.

We have learned from experience and analysis that authorizers can have a significant impact on the quality of charter schools in their cities and states. Some places have strong authorizing agencies in place and a strong, growing charter school sector. Other cities and states have weak authorizing in place and too many weak charter schools. Unfortunately, too little attention has been paid to the work of authorizers.

NACSA supports H.R. 2218 because, for the first time ever, funds are reserved within the federal Charter Schools Program to strengthen authorizing throughout the country. H.R. 2218 also requires states that receive grants to work with charter schools and their authorizers to ensure that schools meet their obligations to students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

We look forward to continuing to work with Congress to put in place firm assurances that would require charter schools receiving federal grants to have basic quality control standards in place which protect the interests of the schools, students and taxpayers. These standards include a detailed legal contract with its authorizer; independent, annual financial audits; and defined academic and operational performance standards.

Thousands of charter schools have provided a quality education to millions of students over the past two decades. Indeed, the charter school movement has enjoyed significant bipartisan support, including from each Republican and Democratic nominee for President since 1996. Yet there remains room for improvement.

Too many children across America still do not have access to a quality school. While there are many excellent charter schools, there are also too many failing charter schools. By strengthening charter school authorizing, H.R. 2218 will support the growth in both the number and quality of charter schools while also ensuring that charter schools are open to and serve all students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Greg Richmond". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

President & CEO