



June 21, 2011

Representative John Kline Chairman Education and the Workforce U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

Representative George Miller Ranking Member Education and the Workforce U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515 Representative Duncan Hunter Chairman, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, Education and the Workforce Committee Washington, DC 20515

Representative Dale Kildee Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, Education and the Workforce Committee Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Kline, Hunter, Miller and Kildee:

On behalf of more than 1.8 million children attending the 5,000 public charter schools across the country, the charter school community thanks you for your leadership in promoting more high-quality public charter school options for families and students nationwide. Your introduction of H.R. 2218, the Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act, brings to House consideration a significant reauthorization proposal that has the support of the charter school movement. This legislation provides the much-needed resources to help high-achieving charter schools overcome the myriad of obstacles that prevent them from growing to serve thousands more students. It streamlines the programs to improve and bring efficiency to the grant process and focuses on quality practices so charter schools continue to be models of operational and academic success for the public education system.

Specifically, H.R. 2218 authorizes the expansion and replication of top-performing charter schools that address the needs of at-risk and underserved students. Charter schools will have the opportunity to continue practices proven to deliver results and expand innovations designed to meet the needs of 21st century learners. The Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act will also drive the next generation of state policies around quality and accountability for all parties involved in the chartering process. The legislation's focus on improving and supporting the practices of charter authorizers will prompt states to recognize that there are many parties that affect the quality of public charter schools—and all should all be held accountable for their performance.

Moreover, H.R. 2218 will provide grants to create innovative credit enhancement initiatives that assist charter schools with addressing the cost of acquiring, constructing and renovating facilities. The legislation will also provide funds to help states establish or enhance and administer perpupil facilities aid programs for public charter schools.

As Congressional efforts continue on the reauthorization of the Charter School Programs, your proposal represents a significant contribution to shaping the debate. It should be noted however that there are significant concerns with capping authorization levels and potentially stifling growth of the programs in the forthcoming years. We look forward to working with Congress to address this concern as the legislation moves through the process. For now, the public charter school movement stands ready to back this cause and to lend our support for H.R. 2218, the Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act.

Sincerely,

American Federation for Children Arizona Charter Schools Association Aspire Public Schools Charter School Lenders Coalition **Democracy Builders** Democracy Prep Public Schools Democrats for Education Reform Green Dot Public Schools **IDEA Public Schools** K12. Inc. Mastery Charter Schools Network National Alliance for Public Charter Schools NewSchools Venture Fund Success Charter Network Texas Charter School Association **Uncommon Schools**

cc: U.S. Secretary Arne Duncan

Members of the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions