



**Opening Statement of Rep. Aaron Bean (R-FL), Chairman
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
Hearing: “Proven Results: Highlighting the Benefits of Charter Schools for
Students and Families”**

March 6, 2024

(As prepared for delivery)

This is a special time of year. And no, not because cherry blossom season is almost upon us. For children across the country trapped in failing school districts, this is the season of opportunity.

Each year, in the spring, thousands of parents, families, and eager young students gather around their computers to wait—and to pray—for a name to appear.

The room is still. Parents sit silently with bated breath. They know the next few minutes could have a profound impact on the course of their children’s lives.

A name appears, and happiness erupts. A lucky winner has been picked. With the good fortune comes the opportunity for a student to escape an abysmal traditional public school and enroll at a school that meets his or her individual needs.

This is the story of our nation’s charter school lotteries. The joy in a parent’s heart when his or her child is accepted is one of the foremost reasons that I support charter schools.

I also recognize there is a flipside to this story. Charter schools have limited seats, and the lottery system, while fair, does not pan out for every family.

For the smiles, there are tears. This is the sad reality, but it isn’t an argument against these schools. On the contrary, it’s an argument for expanding charter school access so every child can receive a high-quality education, no matter his or her zip code.

And expand they have. Charter schools are relatively new in terms of American education, with the first charter issued in Minnesota in 1992. They have since ridden the school choice wave to over 8,000 communities, serving nearly four million students across 45 states.

Furthermore, charter school growth is accelerating. Enrollment doubled in the most recent decade. And seventy-four percent of parents would consider sending their child to a charter school if given the chance.

The charter success story is linked to thousands of student success stories. As studies and testimonials emerge from the first class of charter schools, they've proven what we all expected—removing the education bureaucracy is a boon to student achievement.

Now, charter graduates have the chance to send their own children to charter schools. I see it as the Committee's role to give them the best possible chance to do so.