

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2023

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you provide \$500 million for the Charter Schools Program (CSP). We also support floors or caps rather than set amounts for subprograms within the CSP to allow the Department of Education continued flexibility to allocate funds according to changing needs.

In the 2020-2021 school year, 7.5 percent of public school students, or 3.7 million students in more than 7,800 schools, attended public charter schools. Demand continues to grow with charter schools seeing a nearly 7 percent growth of nearly 240,000 additional students during the first two full school years of the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey commissioned by National Association for Public Charter Schools and conducted by The Harris Poll found that 81 percent of parents support expanding the number of slots in existing public charter schools in their area, and 77 percent want more public charter school offerings in their area.¹

Public charter schools deliver high quality educational options for students, particularly for those from underserved backgrounds. Nearly 60 percent of students at public charter schools are eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch, over two-thirds are students of color, and 11 percent are English Learners – all levels above the traditional public schools' average. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, charter schools are also more likely to be led by and employ people of color, with 31.5 percent of teachers and 33.4 percent of school leaders being people of color.

A 2020 Harvard University study found that public charter school students benefitted from almost six additional months of learning, with the most notable gains being observed among Black and economically disadvantaged students.² Similarly, a 2015 report from the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University found that public charter schools in our nation's largest urban districts are delivering significant performance improvements for the most disadvantaged students.³ The CSP also supports the opening of public charter schools that are more likely to be successful. According to a 2022 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report requested in House Report 116-450, public charter schools that received CSP funding were 1.5 times less likely to close in the first five years of operation those that did not receive CSP funding.⁴

¹ "Never Going Back: An Analysis of Parent Sentiment in Education," August 2022, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, https://www.publiccharters.org/sites/default/files/documents/2022-08/Never%20Going%20Back%202022%20Harris%20Poll%20Report_v5.pdf.

² Shakeel, M. Danish, and Paul E. Peterson. "Charter Schools Show Steeper Upward Trend in Student Achievement than District Schools." *Education Next* 21.1 (Winter 2021): 40-48.

³ "Urban Charter School Study Report on 41 Regions," 2015. Center for Research on Education Outcomes, Stanford University, <https://urbancharters.stanford.edu/summary.php>.

⁴ "K-12 Education: Charter Schools That Received Federal Funding to Open or Expand Were Generally Less Likely to Close Than Other Similar Charter Schools," October 2022, United States Government Accountability Office, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-23-105616.pdf>.

Additional funding for the CSP will support the launch of new schools, continue the replication and expansion of successful charter schools, offer important resources to help public charter schools access facilities, and provide critical technical and assistance and support. Again, we urge you to continue building on this investment by providing increased funding for the CSP. We appreciate your leadership on this issue and thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



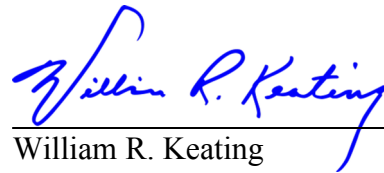
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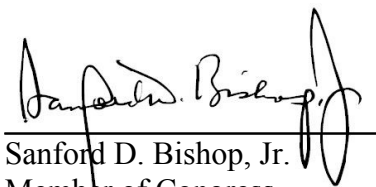
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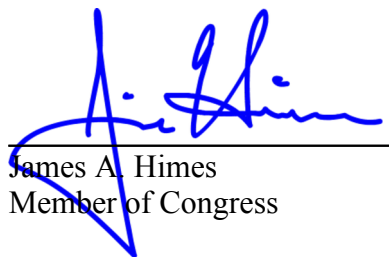
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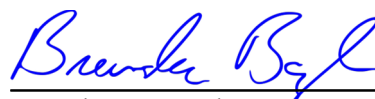
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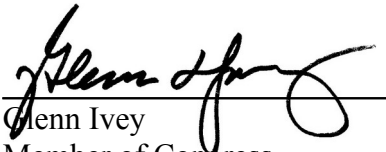
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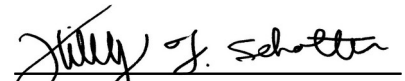
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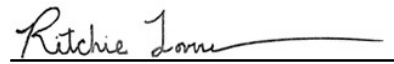
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Member of Congress



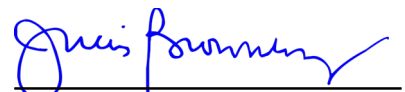
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