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United States Senate

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SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

May 24, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
SG-136 Dirksen
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
125 Hart Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As the Committee begins consideration of FY2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related agencies appropriations legislation, we are writing to request that you strongly support the Charter School Program (CSP).

Charter schools have allowed parents to choose a high-quality educational environment for their child regardless of income or geographic location. The unique educational experiences many charter schools provide help level the playing field and ensure more children have a chance to achieve the American Dream.

Forty-four states and the District of Columbia have enacted charter school laws. In the 2016-2017 school year, public charter schools are educating more than 3.1 million students in over 6,900 schools. That is an estimated enrollment increase of over 200,000 students, representing a 7% growth in one school year. Over half of the students served by these institutions are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, over half are students of color, and 17 percent are Limited English proficient – all higher percentages than those served in traditional public schools. Sadly, there are still over 1 million students on waiting lists for charter schools nationwide.

Public charter schools continue to grow and deliver outstanding educational options to students nationwide and, in particular, to low-income students. A 2015 report from the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University found that charter schools located in our nation's largest urban districts are showing significant performance improvements for the most disadvantaged students. CSP funds are critical to support the launching of new schools, sharing successful innovations with traditional public schools, and providing incentives to state governments and communities to provide school facilities. In states that do not have dedicated funding for facilities and transportation, the CSP is all the more important.

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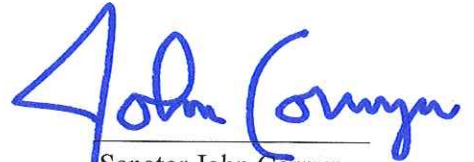
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We are appreciative of the current investment in CSP, and we hope the subcommittee will build on the success of the program. The CSP is currently the only federal program that supports parental choice in education across the country. Through additional resources, we can ensure that more children have access to a high-quality education regardless of their parents' income or their zip code. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Senator Tim Scott



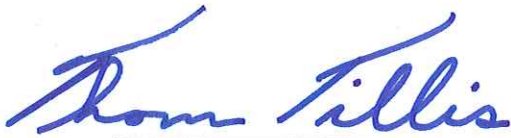
Senator John Cornyn



Senator Johnny Isakson



Senator Bill Cassidy



Senator Thom Tillis