



September XX, 2021

Senator Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education &
Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education &
Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 2051

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

We are writing to urge you to ensure all public school students are treated fairly and equitably in the final FY 2022 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. Since FY 2019, the Charter Schools Program (CSP) has been level funded at \$440 million. In the recently passed House appropriations minibuss, H.R. 4502, significant new resources are proposed for K-12 education—a 40% increase in investments overall, including for Title I. Unfortunately, the bill disregards recent evidence of strong demand nationwide for charter schools by recommending a nearly 10% cut for the CSP, funding it at \$400 million. The CSP was the only K-12 program that received a cut. The most recent state assessment results confirm that the pandemic has caused significant learning losses and exacerbated achievement gaps. Right now, more than ever, students need high quality schools that can accelerate their learning gains, and Congress should support multiple pathways and programs that can accelerate gains and mitigate pandemic learning loss.

In addition to singling out the CSP for a cut, the House bill includes harmful language that puts millions of students at risk of losing all their federal funding simply because of the type of public school they attend—a public charter school. From mental health counselors to back-office administration, both charter and district public schools rely on private companies to support their students. The House bill unfairly singles out charter schools from other public schools for regulations on the types of partners they can work with, threatening to undermine the impact that charter schools have made around the country.

Singling out public charter schools for additional regulations that do not apply to other types of public schools threatens the gains that charter schools have made in communities around the country. From transportation services and school meals to school improvement, virtual platforms, and classroom management, both charter schools and district schools rely on private companies to support their students. Charter schools should not be singled out for regulation of practices that are common to all public schools.

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The impact of such regulation could be the closure of public schools that lack financial resources and would have a disproportionate impact on schools serving a high percentage of students with disabilities and students from low-income families. In rural areas, for example, there are often limited options for providing services for students with disabilities, and schools will contract for PT, OT, and other services from private providers.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, more families than ever are seeking public school options—including charter schools—that meet their children’s needs. Charter schools around the country are rising to the occasion and making a difference in kids’ lives, serving a diverse student population of more than 3.5 million students. Nearly 60% of the students served by charter schools are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, more than two-thirds are students of color, 14.3 percent are English learners, and a growing number are students with disabilities who now represent 12 percent of all charter school students.

All public schools deserve to be treated fairly and equitably, regardless of whether they are charter or district schools. Singling out charter schools for additional regulations that do not apply to district schools could have a devastating impact on public education across the country, harming children from the most vulnerable communities. We urge you to ensure all public schools are treated fairly in the final LHHS bill: that the CSP is not singled out for a cut and that some public school students are not cut off from their federal funding simply because of the type of public school they choose to attend.

Sincerely,

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools