



National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

December 16, 2009

The Honorable Jared Polis
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Polis:

On behalf of more than 1.5 million children attending more than 5,000 public charter schools across the country, the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools thanks you for your leadership in support of promoting more high-quality public charter school options for families and students nationwide. We applaud your tireless efforts to ensure that charter schools were treated fairly in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act; your work during the FY2010 Appropriations process to secure increased funding for the charter programs; and, now your introduction of the All Students Achieving through Reform or “All-STAR” Act (H.R. 4330), is a significant new proposal that has the full support of the charter school movement. Recognizing the many difficulties that the best charter schools face when they try to serve more students, this legislation provides new resources to help them overcome those obstacles and grow the most successful charter models across the country.

All-STAR will create an invaluable new program to support the expansion and replication of top-performing charter schools that address the needs of at-risk students, while also driving the next generation of state policies around quality and accountability for all parties involved in the chartering process. The legislation’s focus on improving the practices of charter authorizers will prompt many states to recognize that there are many parties that affect the quality of public charter schools – and they should all be held accountable for their performance.

Moreover, All-STAR recognizes that entities besides State Education Agencies can be responsible for the growth of high-quality charter schools, enabling non-profit Charter Management Organizations among others to apply for funding. Equally important, the legislation recognizes that simply replicating our best charters isn’t enough - it requires these schools to have in place plans for disseminating their successful practices and models to other public schools and districts to ensure that the impact goes far beyond just the individual school or campus that receives funding.

As Congressional efforts begin on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we know your bold proposal is a significant contribution to shaping the debate and ultimately, hopefully, the reauthorization. The entire public charter school movement stands ready to lend our support in this cause and to support H.R. 4330, the All-STAR Act.

Sincerely,

Nelson Smith
President and CEO