

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

1615 H STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000
202/463-5310

October 21, 2015

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, urges you to support H.R. 10, the "Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Reauthorization Act" (SOAR Reauthorization Act). This legislation would reauthorize the DC Opportunity Scholarship program, which was created in 2004 with bipartisan support as a way to improve and expand quality educational experiences in all of the District of Columbia's education sectors—public, charter, and non-public.

School choice initiatives provide the best hope for low-income parents to have the flexibility necessary to ensure their child is able to attend a school that best meets their academic needs. H.R. 10 would ensure the continuation of the nation's only school choice program supported by the federal government. This year alone, the DC Opportunity Scholarship program enabled 1,442 students to select from over 50 participating schools. Many of these students previously attended persistently underperforming public schools in our nation's capital, which despite recent improvements have a collective graduation rate below 60 percent.

The outlook for students participating in the DC Opportunity Scholarship program is far brighter. According to the American Federation for Children, over 90 percent of program participants graduate high school and nearly 90 percent of program participants go on to attend college. These outcomes demonstrate this program's success for the past decade and why more and more parents are seeking to have their child participate. H.R. 10 would ensure this vital opportunity continues to exist.

The Chamber thanks Speaker Boehner for introducing H.R. 10, the "Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Reauthorization Act," and for his longtime leadership on expanding school choice for students, and urges swift passage of this bill.

Sincerely,



R. Bruce Josten