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 SUZANNE BONAMICI, OREGON

August 15, 2013

Mr. Greg Richmond  
 President & CEO  
 National Association of Charter School Authorizers  
 105 West Adams Street, Suite 3500  
 Chicago, IL 60603-6253

Dear Mr. Richmond:

In a July 17, 2013, report entitled *Education Needs to Further Examine Data Collection on English Language Learners in Charter Schools (GAO-13-655R)*, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that nonreporting by charter schools, along with other factors, contributes to the lack of data quality on not only English Language Learner (ELL) students in charter schools, but also measures of school and student performance. This report was the result of a study we commissioned regarding the enrollment of ELL students in public charter schools compared to non-charter public schools. That study was rendered impossible to conduct due to these data quality issues. We write to call your attention to the findings of this report and to urge the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and its members to work in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and other education stakeholders to improve charter school reporting on indicators including ELL enrollment and student and school performance.

We believe it imperative that public charter schools provide ELL students and their families with equitable access to quality educational options. Unfortunately, GAO found a comparison of ELL enrollment in public charter schools to be impossible to conduct because of gaping holes in school-level data due largely to widespread charter school nonreporting. Additionally troubling, the issues uncovered in nonreporting are not limited in scope to ELL enrollment, as GAO and ED determined there to be significant gaps in charter school reporting on student performance data, including reading and math proficiency rates, and graduation rates for all students.

In the 2010-2011 school year, GAO found 14 states in which at least 60 percent and 5 states in which at least 80 percent of charter schools submitted blank fields for ELL counts. Many of the states with a high incidence of nonreporting support robust networks of charter schools. For example, in 2010-11, 340 public charter schools served 9.1 percent of all Ohio students.<sup>1</sup> With at least 80 percent of Ohio charter schools not reporting on ELL program participation, we have strong concerns about the validity of Ohio's overall LEA and state-level data.

<sup>1</sup> <http://dashboard.publiccharters.org/dashboard/schools/page/overview/state/OH/year/2011>

Mr. Greg Richmond  
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This nonreporting is flatly unacceptable. It is imperative that we have access to reliable data for all public schools, LEAs, and states in order to fulfill our responsibility of equitably serving all children and families. We understand that State and Local Educational Agencies cite ongoing barriers to charter school data collection. Your association should be uniquely positioned to assist in overcoming these barriers. We urge you to work cooperatively with your members and local, state, and federal education agencies to improve reporting and the quality of data received from charter schools.

Thank you for your leadership in promoting quality education for all students and families. We look forward to working with you on this critical issue and learning about any measures taken by your association to support the improvement of overall transparency and data quality in charter schools.

Sincerely,



**GEORGE MILLER**  
Senior Democratic Member



**RAUL GRIJALVA**  
Member of Congress

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August 15, 2013

Ms. Nina Rees  
 President & CEO  
 National Alliance for Public Charter Schools  
 1101 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 1010  
 Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Rees:

In a July 17, 2013, report entitled *Education Needs to Further Examine Data Collection on English Language Learners in Charter Schools (GAO-13-655R)*, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that nonreporting by charter schools, along with other factors, contributes to the lack of data quality on not only English Language Learner (ELL) students in charter schools, but also measures of school and student performance. This report was the result of a study we commissioned regarding the enrollment of ELL students in public charter schools compared to non-charter public schools. That study was rendered impossible to conduct due to these data quality issues. We write to call your attention to the findings of this report and to urge the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools and the charter school community to work in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and other education stakeholders to improve charter school reporting on indicators including ELL enrollment and student and school performance.

We believe it imperative that public charter schools provide ELL students and their families with equitable access to quality educational options. Unfortunately, GAO found a comparison of ELL enrollment in public charter schools to be impossible to conduct because of gaping holes in school-level data due largely to widespread charter school nonreporting. Additionally troubling, the issues uncovered in nonreporting are not limited in scope to ELL enrollment, as GAO and ED determined there to be significant gaps in charter school reporting on student performance data, including reading and math proficiency rates, and graduation rates for all students.

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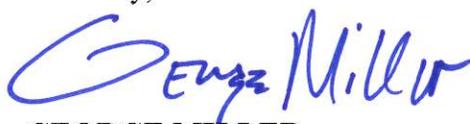
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**GEORGE MILLER**  
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