



1201 16th St., N.W. | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Lily Eskelsen García  
*President*

Rebecca S. Pringle  
*Vice President*

Princess R. Moss  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

John C. Stocks  
*Executive Director*

June 12, 2018

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our three million members and the students they serve, we write to thank you for holding the upcoming hearing on charter schools. At the 2017 NEA annual meeting, after a year of committee study and twenty-five years of observing charter schools operate nationally, our delegates voted to pass the NEA Policy Statement on Charter Schools, which seeks to clarify and contribute to the national discussion around these types of public schools. A copy of this policy statement can be viewed on [NEA's website](#).

As the introduction to our policy statement makes clear, “as educators we believe that public education is the cornerstone of our social, economic, and political structure, the very foundation of good citizenship and the fundamental prerequisite to every child’s future success.” In many cases, the growth of separate and unequal systems of charter schools that are not subject to the same basic safeguards and standards that apply to public schools damages the ability for each student to fulfill their potential. NEA continues to support public charter schools that, among other things: are authorized or expanded only after a district has assessed the impact of the proposed charter school on the local public school resources, programs and services; are held accountable by locally elected school boards or their equivalent; are both necessary to meet the needs of students in the district and will meet those needs in a manner that improves the overall local public school system; and must consider the impact of the charter on the racial, ethnic and socio-economic composition of schools and neighborhoods and on equitable access to quality services to for all district students. Given these requirements, NEA opposes unaccountable privately managed charters, as they do not comply with the above basic safeguards and standards, are not authorized by the local school board, and necessarily undermine local public schools.

Many of your witnesses today will relay data about charter school success stories. While there are certainly highlights and success stories, studies have documented that at their best, charters, on average, do no better than public schools in terms of student learning, growth, or development. Learnings from those charter schools where students perform above average are not incorporated into district-wide school improvement efforts. At their worst, charters inflict significant harms on both students and communities.

We are encouraged that the Committee has chosen to shine a light on charter schools, and we encourage the members to deeply study the issue, ask questions, and demand accountability for public dollars and all students' educations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Egan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and 'E'.

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association