

# Four Ways You Can Help Launch the "Campaign for Charter Schools in Maryland"

It's time to we had Charter Schools in Maryland. But until the legislature approves a bill to do so, the children of Maryland will be denied a new opportunity to help reduce class size, make schools smaller and more responsive and set higher standards.

You can make a difference, today. Here are four ways you can help launch the "Campaign for Charter Schools in Maryland," and improve education for all the children of our state!

1. Send a letter to your Delegate and State Senator supporting charter schools. Two possible drafts are on the reverse, but sending something in your own words is always best. At the bottom of the drafts are instructions on how to find out who your elected representatives are.
2. Talk to your friends and neighbors about charters. Get them involved in the fight. Show them the enclosed brochure, and help educate them about the importance of charter schools.
3. Mark your calendar for our "Charter School Workshop", scheduled for March 3. It will be a time to learn about the opportunities for kids that charters can offer. You will learn about curricula that works, and how it can make a difference in the lives of Maryland children. More information will follow.
4. Keep informed by checking out the website of Maryland Parents for Better Education at [www.charterschoolsmd.net](http://www.charterschoolsmd.net), and signing up to receive additional information on the battle for charter schools in Maryland.



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# THE MISSION

## Save Opportunity is about...

- ...our children, their education, and their future.
- ...giving parents the freedom they deserve to find the best school for their child.
- ...protecting DC Opportunity Scholarships, which have allowed 2,000 DC low-income students to attend private schools they would otherwise not be able to afford.
- ...providing the same opportunity that our local and national leaders have to send their children to schools that are safe, strong and good for kids.

Help save opportunity for children in our nation's capital by **writing Congress TODAY!**





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# THE URGENCY

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**Save Opportunity** is a community initiative to protect the successful DC Opportunity Scholarship Program.

**The five-year school scholarship program is scheduled to expire** after the school year ending in June 2010 and the families who currently receive the scholarship will lose these funds.

Many, if not all of the children currently receiving scholarships will be forced to go to failing DC public schools, **86 percent of which do not meet adequate yearly progress goals.**

**Save Opportunity** is a cause to allow a small percentage of students to be granted the "opportunity" to access a wider range of schools that can give them a different perspective.

It gives us a chance to measure the differences these kinds of programs can make and to better value both our public and private school communities.




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## THE INITIATIVE

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### ***Knock for Opportunity***

**Save Opportunity** is also a grassroots initiative aimed at increasing awareness, passion and ACTION amongst key decision makers and influencers in DC.

We've all heard the phrase "Opportunity Knocks" or "When Opportunity Knocks, Will You Answer?"

Our doors are a reminder that for many students, opportunity never knocks... not because these students have no talent or potential, but simply because they live in a zip code without the kind of schools that can inspire the best in them and launch them to fulfill their potential.

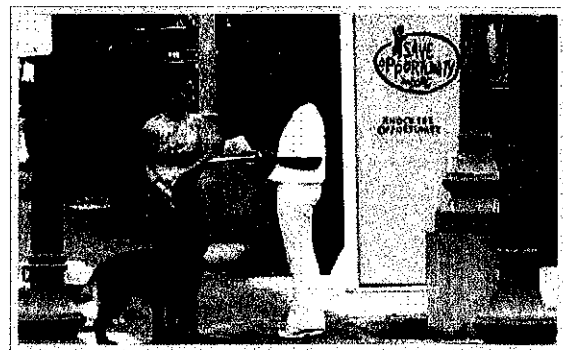
The act of "Knocking for Opportunity" is a moment of solidarity with our cause and it is our hope that these knocks gather momentum and amplify all the way to Congress where we can act as a community to enfranchise these needy and deserving kids and protect a program that should stand above partisanship and lobbying interests.

Throughout the summer months, Save Opportunity's "Knock for Opportunity" program will be canvassing Metro stops, fairs, festivals and farmers markets around DC.

With bright and symbolic doors, trained brand ambassadors and volunteers, informational flyers and letters of support, the message of urgency is reaching thousands of DC residents in addition to those outside of district walls.

Check out [photos](#) of our team in ACTION

[Click here](#) for dates & locations where you can Knock for Opportunity





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## THE RESULTS

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### *We're taking ACTION*

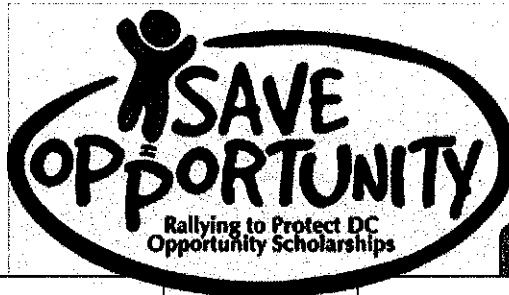
The Save Opportunity program has communicated in person with over 15,000 people.

Most importantly, we have collected over 3,000 letters and signatures in support of DC Opportunity Scholarships.

Support is increasing, the message is spreading and the numbers continue to grow.

If you want Save Opportunity to come to speak at your community event or in your neighborhood, **contact us.**




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## WHAT FOLKS ARE SAYING

[What Local Folks are Saying...](#)
[Heard on the Hill](#)
[What Supporters are Saying...](#)

### What Local Folks Are Saying

"[Nico] is in the 2nd grade at Naylor Road Private School. He is able to attend through the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program and he is excelling.... The Opportunity Scholarship Program has been a true blessing for me as well as Nico.... It would devastate my child if he were to have to leave Naylor Road due to the fact that the OSP is on the chopping block and I can't afford to send him there on my own."

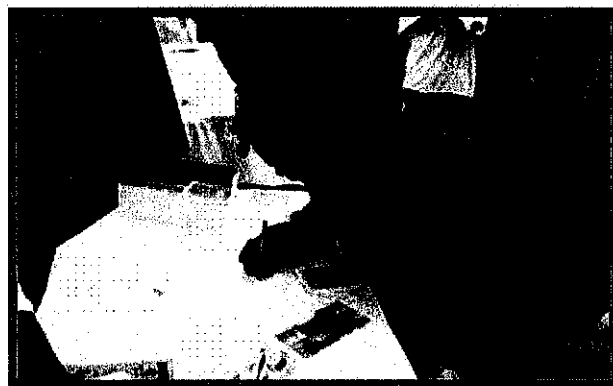
-**Latasha Bennett**, Parent, Naylor Road School, Testimony before Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, 5/13/09

"(This) is the first step in what is the biggest civil rights issue for this community"

-**Kevin Chavous**, Former DC City Councilman, Wall Street Journal, 5/5/09

"You have the ability to give other D.C. children the opportunity I had. My education gave me the chance at a successful future. Please don't end a program that worked for me and is benefiting tons of other children. Three years from now I'll be walking across a stage receiving my college diploma. Without the OSP, none of this would have been possible."

-**Tiffany Dunston**, Student, Syracuse University and Graduate, Archbishop Carroll High School, Testimony before Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, 5/13/09



"In America it should not be a privilege for any of our children to get a first rate education. In my opinion it is a right, although often a right that is not honored. Without an equal education for all there cannot be equality for all, the kind of equality that our founding documents promised."

**-Ronald Holassie**, Student, Archbishop  
Carroll High School, Testimony before Senate  
Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs, 5/13/09

"As many of you know, I was present at the creation of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program. Some people claim that it was forced on the city by a Republican White House. This is not accurate and I'd like to set the record straight. This program was shaped and championed by D.C. leaders, including myself, Kevin P. Chavous, who was a member of the D.C. City Council and Chair of the Education Committee, and then President of the D.C. Board of Education, Peggy Cooper Cafritz, and numerous local parents, educators, and community leaders. We worked closely with the previous administration to develop what many refer to as a "three sector program" with unprecedented investments for all our children."

**-Former Mayor Anthony A. Williams**,  
District of Columbia, Testimony before Senate  
Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs, 5/13/09

"The Opportunity Scholarship Program is the beginning of the opening up of the genuine possibility for all American students to know and experience one another. What could be better for the goal of ending the polarity of "red and blue" in America, which I know you desire, than the creation of a nation of citizens who respect and understand the perspectives held by people of differing backgrounds and viewpoints. Our collective essence as Americans has always been the source of our truest strength. Please don't allow this important step toward pluralism that OSP represents to recede. Keep the windows you have opened open, and unlock even more! Go forward and not backward: enlarge our national vision, do not narrow it!"

**-Bruce B. Stewart**, Head of School, Sidwell  
Friends School, Testimony before Senate  
Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs, 5/13/09

"I strongly urge the Committee to pass a reauthorization

bill for the OSP. It is not enough to fund only the current children while not accepting new applications. That decision would split up families, could force the closure of some schools, and seems to be made based on political compromise rather than on the facts. It will be difficult to administer this program on a scale smaller than the current size. Participating schools will face higher per capital compliance burdens as the number of students dwindle. Moreover, it sends a mixed message to parents regarding the program's future and the certainty that their children can continue their educational path uninterrupted."

**-Former Mayor Anthony A. Williams,**  
District of Columbia, Testimony before Senate  
Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs, 5/13/09






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# NEWS YOU CAN USE



**IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:**  
**AN OPPORTUNITY THAT WORKS FOR D.C. SCHOOLCHILDREN**  
*From the Washington Post*

By [Name] on [Date]

The Washington Post article discusses the success of the Opportunity Scholarship program in D.C. schools, highlighting how it provides an alternative to public schools for many students. The article notes that the program has been successful in providing a better education for many children, particularly those from low-income families. It also mentions that the program has been expanded to include more schools and students.

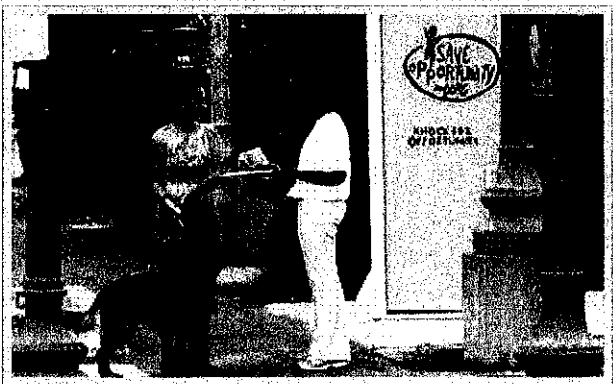
According to testimony by Patrick Wolf, the principal investigator for the program, the voucher program "has met a high standard for efficacy in serving low-income urban city students."

Wolf told the Committee that the program is working and is improving student performance. He noted that the program's success is due to its focus on providing a high-quality education for all students, regardless of their background.

Wolf also testified that the program is cost-effective and that it provides a better value for money than public schools. He noted that the program's success is due to its focus on providing a high-quality education for all students, regardless of their background.

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**"An Opportunity That Works For D.C. Schoolchildren"**  
 Washington Post  
 June 22, 2009

**"Protesters Blast Congress for Axing D.C. Vouchers While Sending Own Kids to Private School"**  
 Fox News  
 May 6, 2009

**"Obama's Budget Follies"**  
 The Washington Post  
 April 22, 2009

**"Only for the Privileged Few?"**  
 The Washington Post  
 April 19, 2009

**"Education, By Any Means"**

The Washington Post  
April 14, 2009

**"Presumed Dead"**

The Washington Post  
April 11, 2009

**"The Right People to Decide D.C. Vouchers' Fate"**

The Washington Post  
April 4, 2009

**"Study Supports School Vouchers"**

The Washington Post  
April 4, 2009

**"Don't Pull the Plug Yet"**

The Washington Post  
April 4, 2009

**"Vouchers on the Line"**

The Washington Post  
March 14, 2009

**"The City's Children Need Opportunities"**

The Washington Post  
March 29, 2009

# SEPTEMBER 30 RALLY FOR BETTER EDUCATION

**Our Children Deserve a Great Education.**

**Join us September 30 to help make sure they get it!!!**

Today in the District, the power for parents to choose great schools for their children is being threatened by Congress. Our students are losing scholarships that have given them hope for a brighter future.

We need your help to **STOP this social injustice** to save opportunity in the District so **ALL** students can achieve.



**When:** Wednesday, September 30, 2009  
11:30 am – 1:00 pm

**Where:** U.S. Capitol, Upper Senate Park  
(Constitution Ave NW & New  
Jersey Ave NW)

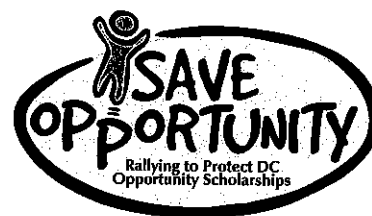
**Metro:** Union Station or Capitol South

**Need Help Getting there?**

Call us, busing is being arranged from points throughout the city.

Call **1-800-521-2118 to RSVP** and to reserve your **FREE boxed lunch** and free t-shirt by 12pm on Monday, September 28.

**If you care about  
our children's  
future,  
call 1-800-521-2118  
to get on the bus!**



August 14, 2009

Dr. Dora Kingsley  
304 Skyhill Rd  
Alexandria, VA 22314-4918

Dear Dr. Kingsley:

On behalf of the leadership of the education reform movement nationwide, we are writing to ask for your help — today — to ensure that our nation's leaders receive a clear message about a critical, successful education program in the nation's capital that without your intervention, faces extinction.

It is called the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, and has been an overwhelming success—with students demonstrating advanced achievement and with parents posting high levels of satisfaction. The program lets low-income and middle class parents select the best schools for their children—public or private. The program was passed five years ago with bipartisan support—now, even though it is limited to just 2,000 children, each and every one of its participants is making a positive impact on their families and communities.

Why does this matter to you? Because while Congress is spending billions in stimulus money for other programs (and some that don't work) this one small, \$14 million program actually educates poor children and ensures your tax dollars are working to help them become productive citizens. But some Members of Congress and their special interest friends are working overtime to kill the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program. We need your help to make sure that this program—and the future of education reform in America—stays on the right track.

Across the country, 5 million children are confined to 10,000 failing schools. We are writing to ask that you send a message—either through a letter, e-mail, or phone call—to Senator Warner that we must reform education in our nation's capital—and in Virginia.

On July 30, 2009, a bipartisan coalition led by Senators Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and Susan Collins (R-ME) introduced a bill that would reauthorize and strengthen the D.C. school choice program. But some leaders in both Houses of Congress are on record against the program's continuation.

Without your intervention, Dora,—and without the immediate support of Senator Warner—this successful endeavor faces extinction. This program is working to extend better opportunities to children who need our support the most.

Will you join us and send Senator Warner a letter today? Tell Senator Warner that you

*Original*  
**HOW YOU CAN HELP**



Visit [www.saveopportunity.org](http://www.saveopportunity.org) today where you can learn more about the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program and get connected with your federal elected officials online.

**Tips on Communicating with Congress**

- 1.) On Capitol Hill, letters are still the preferred choice of correspondence. But phone and email can be just as effective to ensure your voice is heard.
- 2.) Personalize your letter. Use the sample provided only as a guide to ensure the key points are made.
- 3.) Be sure to stay on point. You should address only one issue in each letter and it should be only one page in length.

**SAMPLE LETTER TO CONGRESS**

Date

The Honorable [Full Name]  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator [Last Name]:

I'm writing to let you know that I support the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) and ask that you vote to support the full reauthorization of the program.

Created by Congress in 2002, the OSP provides school choice for low-income families to pick schools that meet their children's needs best in the nation's capital. I am a resident and voter in [insert state] who strongly believes Congressional support and approval of this program is a MUST especially in our nation's capital where 86 percent of its children are in failing schools.

I believe it is insufficient to only allow current students to graduate or to simply include just their siblings. I strongly endorse the full reauthorization of this program for future generations of students.

I am committed to the change for America our elected leaders in Washington envision. That vision MUST include the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program.

Sincerely,

Your Name  
Full Address  
Phone  
Email

cc: President Barack Obama  
Congressional Leadership