

June 16, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 , U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

I am writing to ask you to join me in supporting the continuation of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, the revolutionary program that brought better educational opportunities to children living in the District of Columbia. Please see the enclosed letter from my colleagues and me expressing support for the proposals submitted by Mayor Adrian Fenty and City Council for the District of Columbia's education system.

Thanks to this historic program, more than 1,900 disadvantaged children have been given the opportunity to attend private schools in the nation's capital. These children are from some of the poorest families in the community with average incomes of approximately \$23,000 per year. Researchers from Georgetown University have evaluated the program and found that parents express "high levels of satisfaction" about their children's new schools. In all, more than 7,200 students have applied for scholarships since 2004.

Beyond helping these students, the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program has also provided additional assistance to the D.C. public education system. As you know, the District has one of the lowest performing public school systems in the country, with only 58 percent of students graduating high school. Current and past leaders including Mayor Fenty and former Mayor Tony Williams have supported this program. By ending this program, Congress would be taking educational opportunities away from 1,900 low-income children and pulling resources out of the D.C. public education system at the very time District leaders are championing essential efforts to reform the city's troubled public schools.

This is an opportunity for us to put politics aside and work together to give disadvantaged children hope for a better future. This program is making a difference in so many children's lives. Thank you in advance for considering this request, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John A. Boehner
Republican Leader