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June 17, 2009

Dear Colleague:

On June 11, 2009 the attached letter was sent to Senators by the National Education Association (NEA) expressing opposition to proposals reportedly under consideration to offer private school vouchers for military families.

For your information I have also attached a letter I wrote to the NEA regarding inaccuracies contained in that letter. My response does not take any position on the proposal in question. However, my letter does take issue with the following statement made by the NEA:

Proponents of a military family voucher program have cited the District of Columbia voucher program as a model. However, the DC voucher pilot program, which is set to expire this year, has been a failure. In fact, over its five year span, the pilot program has yielded no evidence of positive impact on student achievement.

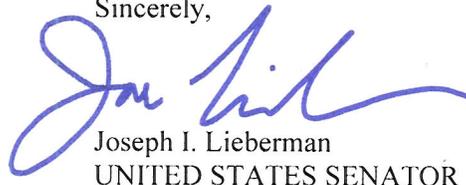
In my response to the NEA, I point out that this statement is inaccurate according to the results of a congressionally mandated study on the District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) -- also known as the DC voucher program -- released earlier this year by the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES). That study, based on three years of data, found that the OSP had a statistically significant positive impact on reading test scores.

According to testimony provided by Dr. Patrick Wolf, the principle investigator for IES, to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, which has jurisdiction over the District, this voucher program "has met a tough standard for efficacy in serving low-income inner-city students." Dr. Wolf further explained that most programs evaluated using similar rigorous methods fail to show any statistically significant improvement. According to Dr. Wolf:

The National Center for Educational Evaluation (NCEE) at the Institute of Education Sciences has released the results of 11 studies that, like this one, employ the methodological rigor of random assignment to treatment and control groups. The DC OSP evaluation is one of only three of these 11 NCEE studies to report overall statistically significant positive achievement impacts in either reading or math.

I hope colleagues will take these facts into consideration during the consideration of the merits of the OSP and relevant issues.

Sincerely,



Joseph I. Lieberman
UNITED STATES SENATOR

Enclosures