

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2012

Ms. Ellen London
President and CEO
DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation
1400 16th Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ms. London:

We are very pleased that Congress passed, and the President signed into law, the SOAR Act which reauthorized the highly successful D.C. Opportunity Scholarships Program (OSP) as part of a “three-sector” approach to educational improvement in the District.¹ We know that as the current Administrator of the OSP, the DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation (the Trust) is uniquely positioned to see firsthand how education can profoundly impact children’s lives, especially those who live in areas where there are persistently underachieving schools.

Since its inception, the OSP has proven to be both popular and successful. According to data provided by your office, as of March 7, 2012, nearly 1,000 applications had been submitted for the 2012-13 school year.² Furthermore, at a Senate hearing on the topic last year, the principal investigator of a 2010 Department of Education study stated, “the research evidence and testimonials of parents confirm that the District of Columbia is a better place because of the Opportunity Scholarship Program.”³ Congress is committed to ensuring the program’s continued success; however, for that to take place it is imperative that the Trust and the Department of Education (Department) work closely and collaboratively so these students can reach their full potential.

As we approach the end of the current school year, we have serious concerns about the working relationship between the Trust and the Department and the subsequent adverse impact it may have on the implementation of the law. So that we may better understand the current status of the SOAR Act’s implementation, we request a response to the below no later than April 6, 2012.

1. Please indicate specific steps the Trust is taking to publicize the program to ensure optimal outreach and parent and school participation.
2. Please specify what assistance the Department has provided to help the Trust run a successful program.
3. Please indicate whether or not the Trust or the Department has suggested there should be a cap on scholarships generally or for any specific grade level.
4. Please indicate the status of reimbursements and disbursements of administrative funds.

¹ The FY11 Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, Public Law 112-10

² Information provided by the DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation

³ Dr. Patrick Wolf, written testimony before the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, February 16, 2011

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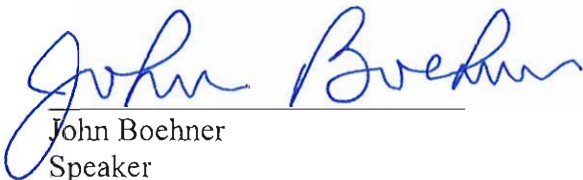
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5. Please provide a copy of all correspondence between the Trust and the Department since the date of the last enrollment of students receiving a scholarship for the 2011-2012 school year (August 15, 2011) to present, including all letters and emails sent.
6. What is the timeline for awarding new scholarships for the upcoming school year? Please include the timeline for notification of awards to parents.
7. Please indicate specific steps the Trust has taken to help ensure the statutorily required evaluation can be conducted.
8. Please indicate whether the Department has requested any information which has not been provided.

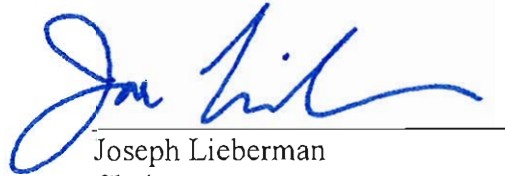
In addition, we request that you immediately assign someone to contact the staff listed below for a briefing concerning this request, including an explanation of the documents and information provided on or before April 6, 2012.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Sotsky at (202) 224-4815, or James Robertson at (202) 225-5074.

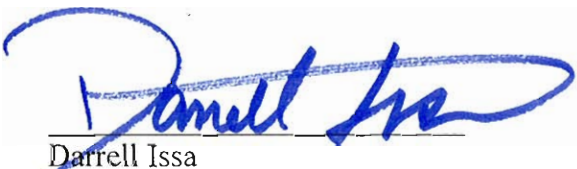
Sincerely,



John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives



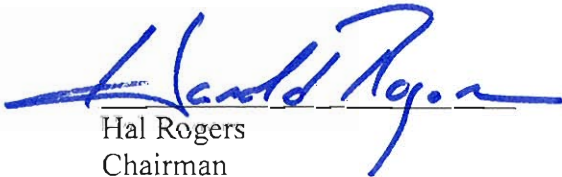
Joseph Lieberman
Chairman
Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
U.S. Senate



Darrell Issa
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives



John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the
Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives



Hal Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

cc: The Honorable Vincent Gray, Mayor of the District of Columbia