

December 9, 2013

Chairman David Catania
Committee on Education
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Chairman Catania,

There are many reasons why citizens of the District are privileged to live in one of the greatest cities in the world. One of those is that DC families have a wider range of educational opportunities available to them than families anywhere else in the world. Recent years have seen significant improvements in DC Public Schools, charter schools have blossomed, private schools have thrived, and homeschooling has grown.

In light of that flourishing variety of teaching methods, philosophies, and goals, I am very grateful that you have chosen to amend the DC Promise Act to declare all DC families eligible for benefits, regardless of the educational path they have taken. The direction you have chosen, to prefer wide-ranging options over narrow, tightly structured requirements, is the better vision for the District. Our city needs students who will thrive in a century steered by new global debates and powered by fast-changing technology.

Thank you especially on behalf of DC's homeschool community. We are a small group and we could easily be ignored. We are grateful that you took the time to specifically include us in the legislation. Just like other families in the District, we struggle when it comes time to send our students off to college. After many decades of advocacy, nearly all colleges in the country accept a homeschool diploma as a legitimate high school diploma. However, now that colleges will consider us for acceptance, we find we can't afford to send our students. The DC Promise Act will help a great many of us insure that our students can begin their adult lives on a strong footing.

There are still a few issues that concern us that we would like to see further amended before the bill becomes law. The most important of these concerns is that homeschool students shouldn't need a "recognized equivalent" of a secondary school diploma, because a homeschool graduate already has a secondary school diploma that is recognized by federal student aid programs, nearly every college and university in the country, and by the US military. We should not have additional requirements placed upon us. I hope the Committee will continue to work through these final issues with us.

Sincerely,



Ethan Reedy
President
DC Home Educators Association