

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Adama Holley, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Adama Holley, and I live in the Bronx and am the mother of four children. My oldest dropped out of high school and got her GED despite always being ahead in her class because of the lack of quality schools that could challenge her level of brilliance. My second child graduated from high school in 2022, but we ultimately had to put her in an alternative high school because by the time we found a charter school with a seat for her, she was in junior high school and catching up after being in a failing school that overwhelmed her. Thankfully, Eagle Academy had space for my two sons and they are getting the education that they deserve. But, they do not have enough seats to serve all the children in my community and it is an all boys school. Families in my neighborhood need better education options for their children because most of the district schools are terrible. Parents should be able to choose from good schools, and more charter schools in my neighborhood would make a major difference.

I implore you all to please support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity! Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC

I thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Adrienne Bannister, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Adrienne and I am submitting this testimony to request that you lift the cap on the number of charter schools that are allowed in the city. For almost five years now, there have been no new charter schools able to open because of the maximum number that was set. The folks who set that number don't live where we do and do not face the challenges we face in my neighborhood. It's hard to find good school options. I thankfully got my daughters into Success Academy. But unfortunately, everyone isn't that lucky.

For some of us, charter schools have been the only hope for a chance at a quality education. They are committed to serving families like mine across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Alma Uruga, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Alma Uruga and I am submitting this testimony to request that you support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Although the number of families seeking out quality charter school options has increased, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018 due to the charter cap. Unfortunately, our children and communities end up the losers in this fight.

It is extremely frustrating to know that there are efforts to prevent more charter schools from opening. My child will be 2 yrs old this year and I'm already looking into different charter schools' programming. I am hoping to find a great school for my son that is close to my home. I am trying to find one where my child does not have to be bussed. I hear nothing but great things from my friends whose children go to Democracy Prep Middle and High School. I love how excited the children are to show their parents their science projects (really sophisticated projects like dissecting mice). My neighbor's son has been in a great place ever since he came from Santo Domingo and started school here in the states. I can't wait for my turn to send my son to school next year.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and stand up for communities like mine by supporting the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Amelia Anthony, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Amelia Anthony and I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

Please stick with your commitment to ensure access to a quality public school education for all and lift the charter cap in NYC! Please, our children deserve a great education and are counting on you to make the right decision here! I am the parent of a 5th grader at Success Academy in Harlem. I moved out of the Bronx, where my daughter used to attend PS 204 public elementary school, and where everyday was a challenge for her at her school. To make matters worse, I was told that she did not qualify for an IEP and therefore was not able to get the extra help she needed. I saw my child struggling and wanted better for her. So, it took me about a year until I moved from the Bronx to Manhattan, because the Bronx did not have many charter schools, and the ones that were nearby had waiting lists that spanned around 20 city blocks long, if not more. I found shelter for us in Harlem and was able to put my child into Success Academy within about a week of moving from the Bronx.

My daughter, Zoey, has improved dramatically with her reading, moving from using simple words to full sentences. I would catch her walking around the house sounding words out on her own. She was very excited when she would complete a book she was reading. Her pass time at home was lining up things in a row and trying to spell them before asking me for help. She was taught how to sound things out for herself before asking for help. She became so good at spelling and reading that it makes my heart smile. Please, please lift the charter cap on opportunities for our children!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that I know you are and stand up for communities like mine by supporting the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Ana Mena, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Ana Mena and I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. My son graduated from high school and never got the opportunity to attend a charter school. We were put on a waitlist but my son was never accepted. I wish for other families to get the chance that we never had.

I know you all have publicly committed to fighting for access to quality education for all NYC families, and I hope you follow through on this by supporting an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. You can help thousands of families in high-needs communities like mine get access to the great public school education that they deserve. Lifting the cap will help New Yorkers for years to come!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that I know you are and stand up for families in communities like mine by supporting the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Andria Gray, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Andria Gray and I am submitting this testimony to request that you support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. I am a mother of two children in the 6th grade at Democracy Prep. Before I found Democracy Prep, both of my children were struggling in traditional public school. The teachers didn't care whether or not the children were actually learning in that environment. They weren't able to provide my children with the quality education that they deserve. Democracy Prep has welcomed my family with open arms into their community. They provided my children with the necessary assistance they needed to get caught up and my girls just love the art courses that they take in the after school program. Charter school has introduced my family to a positive and productive academic career.

Through charter school, my family has received support in and outside of the classroom. We've been invited to events where we met great people that we likely wouldn't have crossed paths with otherwise, and it has been eye opening. I love the changes that I've seen in my family and I believe it is due to being a part of a loving and nurturing community. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
April Henry, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is April Henry and I am not only the product of the NYC school system but I am also the mother of two. My oldest daughter was stuck in failing schools growing up because that is what was available in our neighborhood. She ultimately graduated from Prospect Heights High School but it was a difficult journey getting her over the finish line. My second daughter is 18 years younger than my oldest and we still live in the same neighborhood with the same schools. One thing I knew is that I wanted something better for my youngest daughter. That became possible because I was able to get my daughter into the Success Academy in my neighborhood. She has attended Success Academy since Kindergarten and her academic experience stands in stark contrast to what my oldest received growing up. Success Academy has made a difference in ensuring that my child is doing well in school. Unfortunately, many of my neighbors' children are still attending failing schools in the neighborhood, and I can only imagine it's because the number of options for quality schools is so slim.

I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
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Asha Ogle, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Asha Ogle and my 8 year old son attends Imagine Me Leadership Academy in the East New York section of Brooklyn, NY. Zain is my oldest child, and I did not know anything about the NYC public school system when it was time for him to go to school. What I did know is that my mom and my older sister, Carla, insisted that we had to get him into a great school. Thankfully, my sister did the research and made calls, and found out the process and the deadlines for applying to each one. We applied for Imagine Me Leadership Academy because there are no district schools in my neighborhood good enough for Zain. So, it is a good thing that he got into Imagine Me Leadership Academy. We literally hit the lottery!

I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Although the number of families seeking out quality charter school options has dramatically increased, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018 due to the charter cap. Furthermore, there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. This is just not right!

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that I know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
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Carla McLeod, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Carla McLeod and my 8 year old nephew attends Imagine Me Leadership Academy in the East New York section of Brooklyn, NY and it has been a great experience. My family and I chose to apply for Imagine Me Leadership Academy when it was time for Zain to go to Kindergarten because the educational landscape at district schools in my neighborhood was so dire. Students of Imagine Me Leadership Academy get in through a lottery process, which in layman's terms means it is based on a hope, a prayer and a lot of luck. Thankfully, my nephew won one of the highly sought after seats at Imagine Me Leadership Academy. But, what about all of the children that did not get in and are stuck in failing schools? East New York, Brooklyn needs better schools and charter schools have a proven formula of success that all families should have access to. That is why I am submitting this testimony. I trust that you all are going to do right by families in my community and support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC.

Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight. Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity! So I implore you, do right by families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
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Carmen Monderson, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Carmen Monderson and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of my daughters and other children in my community. I am a mother of two. Having been born in another country, I quickly learned that a good education and hard work are essential to being successful. I came from a country where the schools weren't the best and most people did not finish high school. I wanted something different for my daughters. Both of my girls attend Success Academy. I love their school. I have friends who have a whole host of problems to deal with because all they have is their zoned school. I wish that all families could have access to the quality education and great experience that my girls and I have had. That can only happen if there are quality schools available for everyone. The easiest way to do that is to lift the charter cap.

For years, charter schools have given us and folks in my community a chance at a better education. Charter schools have been opening in communities like mine, that are commonly referred to as "public school deserts", and have been providing quality public school options in neighborhoods where, historically, the only way children can attend a great school is to bus into other neighborhoods. We need that cap lifted immediately to give relief to NYC families. Please be the leaders that we've come to know you to be and stand up for families in communities like mine by supporting the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

I thank you for your time in reading this testimony and your consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
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Cassandra Solomon, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Cassandra Solomon and I am the parent of an 8th grader at School of the Future. We live in Bedford Stuyvesant and I have been riding the subway to Manhattan with my daughter to get her to and from school since she was in Kindergarten because schools in my neighborhood just do not measure up. People that look like me deserve for their children to get a great education just like everyone else, and if that means more charter schools, then every neighborhood should have more charter schools. I am submitting this testimony with the hope that you will all make the right decision and support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Although the number of families seeking out quality charter school options has heavily increased, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018 due to the charter cap. This is not acceptable, and the only losers are our kids.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, I implore you to please do right by our kids and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
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Cherise Johnson, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Cherise Johnson and my youngest son attends Erasmus High School and seems to be on course to getting into a good college. My other son graduated from the same school but was not ready to go to college after graduation. Instead, we had to pay to send him to Georgia Storm Prep Academy and they prepared him for college. This fact highlights the unfortunate reality that there are too many students graduating from NYC high schools unprepared to enter college or the workforce. That should not be the case, and from what I hear, charter schools are doing a much better job of preparing students for their lives post graduation. That is why I am submitting this testimony to you - to request that you put an end to this unfortunate trend of kids graduating from NYC high schools unprepared for college by supporting an NYC regional charter cap lift.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving communities like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city that otherwise wouldn't exist. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you all to please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
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Claudia Perez, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Claudia Perez and I have a daughter in the 7th grade attending Dream Charter School. I am writing this testimony to encourage you to support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. My daughter has been attending Dream Charter School since the 2nd grade and we have not looked back. I had removed her from PS 198 because I felt that my daughter was not receiving a quality education. I felt that PS 198 was failing my daughter and would have continued to do so if I had allowed her to remain in that environment. When we applied and were accepted to Dream Charter School, I found that they challenged my daughter's abilities and even enhanced them. My daughter is now thriving in the 7th grade. I understand the value of a quality education and I'll continue to fight for it.

I've been in conversations with other parents who aren't part of a charter school community and it's heartbreaking to hear about so many children not having the support that they need to be successful. I am so very appreciative of the effort that staff members in the charter school community put in every day to ensure the safety and wellbeing of my daughter.

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you to please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
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Colin Kilkenny, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Colin Kilkenny and I am a father of two. My youngest has not started school yet. I also have a 9th grader who began school in a traditional public school. But, the middle school application process in NYC was such a disaster, that my son ended up being placed in a school that my wife and I never even applied to. As a result, my wife and I sent our son to a private school named LaSalle Academy for middle school. Now my son goes to public school at Bedford Academy for high school. Nobody should have to feel like their child cannot get a quality education because of where they live. I implore you to do whatever is needed to support a NYC charter cap lift and give families the chance to choose. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity.

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So we implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Coralie Hook, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Coralie Hook and I am an NYC Department of Education teacher. I am also the mother of three children who all graduated from specialized high schools in NYC and went on to graduate from college. One of those children is currently in Law School and one has a Masters Degree. I say all of this to impress upon you the importance of children getting a quality education, that not just teaches them the fundamentals, but also nurtures their entire being. Working in NYC schools has given me a bird's eye view on the disparities between schools. I teach at an underperforming school and getting the resources that my students need to be successful along with having proper programming implemented is an uphill battle in a blizzard. Our school is co-located with a charter school that does a phenomenal job with both of these things because they do not have to cut through the bureaucratic processes related to the DOE. In all honesty, I could care less whether a school is a district or charter school, as long as children are allowed to get the best education possible and have options. This is why I am submitting this testimony to you today, to request that you support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that I know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Crystal Lee-McJunkin, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Crystal Lee-McJunkin and I am a parent of a former district school student in NYC. I also am a ten year standing community advocate in my community. I mentor youth in my community and know that we need change immediately. I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Unfortunately, our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

I remember when my child was in public school and the choice of schools in our community was unacceptable. I got offered a charter school seat but it was all the way in Brooklyn, which is very far from my Jamaica, Queens home. I know from being an advocate that Queens has historically been one of the boroughs with the least number of charter schools, and on top of that, our local district schools were under-performing. To this day, I speak with parents who are frustrated and dissatisfied with the school that is right around the corner. Our zip code should not determine the quality of education that is available to us. Opening more charter schools give parents, who have nothing but struggling schools in their community, a choice. Why aren't parents given a choice for their children and afforded the right to a quality education? The moral of my story is even though my son has graduated high school, there are still children being left behind. The fight continues!

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Damian Gaillard, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Damian Gaillard and I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

Too many communities of color suffer from the lack of healthy education options. There is a dire need to change the landscape of education in New York City and charter schools have proven that they can meet that need. There is clear opposition for including a charter school cap lift, but as far as I'm concerned, anyone who stands in the way of children benefiting educationally is the opposition. Considering that charter schools enroll interested families and the waiting lists are heavily populated, I don't see the issue with lifting the cap.

Charter schools are not taking families away from traditional public schools, but they are providing quality education to children who would likely fall through the cracks and be left behind in a traditional public school environment. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please be the leaders that I know you are, and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
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Dantrice Swain, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

As a concerned parent and community member, I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. My name is Dantrice Swain and I'm a single mother of a kid in college. As a child, my parents faced several challenges navigating the school system, and I had no other choice but to attend my zoned public school. There were better schools available when my kid became school age. But, I believe we can go even further by lifting the charter school cap and giving several choices to many different families. We need to have every kind of school in every neighborhood and let people compare and choose which one best fits their children's needs.

In my opinion, when charter schools came into the picture, it kind of made other schools take notice and up their education game. I've learned that a healthy competition can also bring out very positive results. Increasing great public school options by raising the charter cap should be seen as a win for all families because it breeds an atmosphere where all of the schools are now trying to put forth the best education curriculum that they can. I am appealing to you from one parent to another, please lift the cap on quality charter schools immediately! As you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Darlisa Evans, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Darlisa Evans and I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Charter schools have made a significant difference in my children's education. Before being accepted to the charter school community, my children were not feeling challenged and would get in trouble for distracting others. This had so much potential to become a problem, but it opened my eyes to a bigger one that could've had a potentially negative impact on their future. When my children were in traditional public school, I initially thought that I was sending them to a place where they would grow and be challenged while I worked. I soon found out that this was an illusion. Switching to charter school has been the smartest decision that I have made for my children's academic career. Charter school has given me the relief and peace of mind of knowing my children are in a stable and thriving environment.

Thank goodness we found charter schools! So, I implore you, please be the leaders that I know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
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Debra Isaac, Public School Grandparent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Debra Isaac and I am the grandmother of Cameron Isaac. My grandson attends the third grade at Excellence Charter School for Boys. He started school at PS 256 and he was doing okay. My daughter transferred him to a charter school for first grade and we began to see a difference immediately. He seemed much happier, more confident and really liked his teachers. He also talks about the male black teacher that leads his class. He sees him as a powerful influence and role model.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving communities like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. My grandson's school also has higher reading scores than the district school he would have had to attend. But, like many other families, I am praying that he will continue to have access to quality schools until he graduates high school, so that he'll be able to attend a good college and have the opportunities that so many folks from my community never get. I really hope that his school can open a high school. But, that will only happen if the charter cap is lifted.

If I could afford it, I would pay to send my grandson to a private school. But unfortunately, I can't afford to make that choice. Every family deserves to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
DeWayne Murreld, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is DeWayne Murreld and I am a single father of three children. My two daughters attend Success Academy and my son is in college. I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. My son went from traditional public school to a charter and then on to college. I can say with confidence that school choice made all the difference in my son's education. My son at one time was in a failing DOE school that was rated a "D" in the old rating system. Without having another option that was a quality option, I'm unsure as to what the outcome of my son's academic future would have been. I have even changed my career from running businesses to working towards getting every child a quality education.

These innovative charters have been closing the quality education gap and really investing in the families in communities all around the city. I feel strongly that every parent should be afforded the same opportunity I had to get their child the best education possible. That is why I am asking all of you to support lifting the NYC charter school cap. Please be the leaders I've come to know you to be and uphold your commitment to NYC families by supporting the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

On behalf of myself and my three children, we thank you in advance for your time and attention to this important matter.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Dyan Allen, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Dyan Allen and I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. I had the opportunity to put my daughter in charter school and I took it. The public school that she was in just didn't sit right with me. The teachers were not responsive to emails nor voicemail, they treated the parents like they were not welcome and they treated my concerns for my child's progress as if it didn't matter.

It was really frustrating at the time because I had no one to help me navigate through the school system. They treated me as if my concerns were too much and they were not willing to support my child's academic needs. In 2017, I decided that enough was enough and I enrolled my daughter into Democracy Prep. When I say that they were the opposite of the traditional public school that we disenrolled from, I mean exactly that.

The charter school welcomed us with open arms, were very supportive and made us feel like we found our school home. They had access to resources that her prior school found impossible to provide. We loved it there. Brianna received everything that she needed to prepare for Medger Evers, which is the college she is currently enrolled in. I believe that every family should have the same opportunity that mine has had.

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Eric Kears, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Eric Kears. I am a father of eight children and two grandchildren. I currently reside in East New York, Brooklyn. I only have one child still school age and he attends Ascend Charter School. In my neighborhood, the zoned schools are not good. We fought for years just to get my kids into schools outside of the neighborhood. Fortunately, some years ago, Ascend Network came into our neighborhood. It was totally different. These people actually were teaching my kids. I've had two children do well and go off to college after graduating from that charter school. Before that, the only option was to put your kids on the train or bus to another neighborhood for a good education. That wasn't right!

I am asking you to make quality education options available for everyone. I know that allowing more charters to open by lifting NYC's regional cap on charter schools will do just that. So, I implore you, please support Governor Hochul's plan to lift the cap!

Everyone should have the chance to choose what kind of school is best for their child, and there should not be a cap on excellent public school education choices.

Thank you for your time on this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Eva Pointer, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Eva Pointer and I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Unfortunately, our children and communities end up being the losers in this fight.

My name is Eva Pointer and I am the proud parent of ten children, with six of them still in public school. When a charter school first opened up in my neighborhood, I was very excited to see their doors open, but was always on the other side of those doors. Children looked nicely dressed in their uniforms, making everyone look the same so that nobody felt out of place. I applied to the charter school (Democracy Prep) for my child. But unfortunately, she was never called and the waiting list for Democracy Prep in the Bronx was always so long. I got discouraged because the process was so mentally exhausting for parents that just wanted their children to have a great education. At the time, I had just enrolled some of my children into PS 219 in the Bronx and the other ones into CS55 in the Bronx. I would have loved to put my children into a charter school. But, they're all so full and it seems like you have to hope for a miracle to get admitted. So, my children remained in district public schools. If more charter schools opened nearby, my children might actually have a shot at enrolling in a charter, and it would give me the energy and incentive to try again and ultimately switch them to a school where they could receive a better education. Please do what's right for our children and push in your upcoming negotiations to increase the charter cap in NYC! As they always say, "it doesn't matter where you come from, but a great educational background can take you anywhere you want to go in life". Let's allow our children to realize this dream! We can start by lifting the charter cap.

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Falesha Nettles, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Falesha Nettles and I am submitting this testimony to ask that you support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap and I don't understand why. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but can't. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight!

I can tell you firsthand how much we need more charter school options in NYC. Without charter schools, my kids were initially forced to go to PS 298, a failing school. We were so happy when we found Uncommon Schools. They were so needed. They are committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity. Please support the Governor's plan to lift the regional cap on NYC's charter schools and give all families another option at a quality education for their kids like I got. Everybody deserves to be able to choose which school or what kind of school works for their family. Please stand up for our kids by lifting the cap and giving us more quality options.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Hadiyah Haqq, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Hadiyah Haqq and I am submitting this testimony with all my hopes that you will make the right decision and support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. There hasn't been any new charter schools able to open since 2018 due to the cap. Everyone I know and have spoken to has said the same thing, that we need more choices for quality education. There are even networks that want to build more charter schools but cannot because of the cap. That limits how many families can have a quality choice, and that is just wrong. I am counting on all of you to rectify this and lift NYC's regional charter school cap.

A few years ago, my daughters attended PS 328 in Brooklyn and it was not a good fit. Furthermore, I felt that the school as a whole was not really invested in educating my daughters, and my daughters were so uninspired and unchallenged. The problem I had was where else would I send them? That was their zoned school. The other closest school was overcrowded. We were on the waitlist for a new charter school. I was so happy when we got accepted. At their charter school, I saw the stark contrast in the school culture. They were truly committed to helping families and providing a great education to families needing and wanting it most.

Every family deserves the chance to choose what's best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that I know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Ingrid Roberts, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Ingrid Roberts and I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. My daughter currently attends Lamad Academy Charter School. Lamad Academy needs a high school. But, unless the cap is lifted, they won't have one. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, many families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight!

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. I wish all parents had the ability to make a choice between district or charter, instead of tying a kid to a school based on zip code. So, I implore you to please do the right thing by standing up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Iola Lee, Public School Grandparent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Iola Lee and I am a grandmother helping to raise my grandchildren who attend both charter and district schools in NYC. We currently reside in Queens, New York and my oldest grandson has to travel all the way to Brooklyn to go to school. He is a high schooler at Brownsville Prep High School. My youngest grandson is on the waitlist for charter schools in Queens. We'd ideally like him to be a bit closer and attend a school right here in our neighborhood. But, we're not willing to send him to a traditional district school. I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Unfortunately, our children and communities end up being the losers in this fight.

My children and I have done everything from going to community board meetings and school meetings to standing on the steps of City Hall to advocate for the unheard. Why are you tying our hands on what is apparently needed in our community? Why must my grandchildren travel so far to attend a great school?

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity! Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Jacob Lee, Public School Grandparent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Jacob Lee and I am a grandfather helping to raise my grandchildren who attend both charter and district schools in NYC. We currently reside in Queens, New York and my oldest grandson has to travel all the way to Brooklyn to go to school. He is a high schooler at Brownsville Prep High School. My youngest grandson is on the waitlist for charter schools in Queens. We'd ideally like him to be a bit closer and attend a school right here in our neighborhood. But, we're not willing to send him to a traditional district school. I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Unfortunately, our children and communities end up being the losers in this fight.

My children and I have done everything from going to community board meetings and school meetings to standing on the steps of City Hall to advocate for the unheard. Why are you tying our hands on what is apparently needed in our community? Why must my grandchildren travel so far to attend a great school?

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity! Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
James Hunt, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is James Hunt and I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. My daughter, Jaylen, attends Achievement First Charter School and we love it. I also know there are not enough good schools in the city, and allowing for more charter schools will help alleviate this problem. In doing some research, I have found that there are quality charters that want to open more schools but cannot simply because of an arbitrary number. I don't understand why there is a limit on creating quality school choices when quality public school options in NYC are so limited.

From day one on the job, you all have shown us that you are strong leaders. I implore you to do the right thing, for my child and all NYC children, and lift the regional cap on NYC charter schools. For myself and folks in my community, this issue means so much in moving to change the trajectory of success for so many students and families.

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education - please act now and include a regional charter cap lift for NYC in the upcoming budget.

Thank you.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
James Vaz, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is James Vaz. I am submitting this testimony to ask that you support lifting NYC's regional cap on the New York charter school number. I am a very involved parent of a seventeen year old girl with special needs. She has been in public schools in East New York and it was a nightmare. She could not get the services listed in her IEP and she was not learning or advancing at all. Once the charter schools moved in, it gave us a real opportunity for her education. Now, Arabella is about to graduate high school. We got her a scholarship to a private school. But, without the charter school, she would be still stuck in a special education class going nowhere.

One thing I can say is that charter schools coming into our neighborhood was a good thing. They have always been there to support us and give my kid and several folks I know a chance at a true quality education. I believe we all deserve the chance to choose the kind of education that works best for our child. We ask you to please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your consideration on this issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Jaqueline Fulton, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Jaqueline Fulton and I am a lifelong New Yorker. I am submitting this testimony to ask you to support lifting the charter school cap in NYC. We need more great schools so all children can have a great education. We have people waiting on lists and entering lotteries just to get a good education. If the charter cap is lifted, it would help ease that burden for many families. One of the best investments we can make is to bring quality education within reach for every family. As there is a growing number of families that need quality options, the options for families have not increased in years. Raising the charter cap would help alleviate this problem.

My personal challenges with the public school system ended with my son, Travis, going to stay with relatives to get a good education in a different state. Not all families are able to do what I did, nor should they have to. Charter schools have been giving people a choice and a chance to get a better education. I think all families should have that opportunity. Once again, I am asking that you please do the right thing when negotiating this budget and get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Jazmere Brutton, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Jazmere Brutton and I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

I am so grateful that my daughter's grandmother had put my daughter on the waitlist for charter school before she was 3 years old. My daughter, Tegan Dunn, started out in charter school straight from the age of 3 and she was learning faster than my little cousin's son, who attended a district school. My child's vocabulary had increased tremendously, along with her social skills and handwriting, and she was learning another language. Success Academy has been a great inspiration to me and my child and parents are always welcome to drop in as often as they please. The open door policy gives a parent the security of checking in on their child or children whenever they feel like it. Teachers at Success Academy take Tegan on beautiful educational trips and then have them write about their experiences. The children then sit-down in group settings to share their findings and experiences. If your child is in need of any services, extra tutoring, etc., Success Academy is always able to provide what is needed for your child. I am so thankful to Success Academy for a job well done with my daughter. Tegan is now in the 10th grade and is happy as can be.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity! So I implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Jean Holybrice, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Jean Holybrice and I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. As a parent of two children, both of whom went to charter schools, I am a huge supporter of charters. My son and daughter attended Brooklyn Lab.

I implore you, please do what's right for our children and raise the charter cap! I have seen firsthand the academic progress that my children have made over the years. This truly could not have happened without the charter school they attended. It's my wish that other families also get the opportunity to receive the high-quality education that charters offer.

All families deserve great schools in their communities. Charters offer high-quality education in the neighborhoods that need it the most. Please include a regional charter cap lift in NYC in your the Budget!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Joanne Webb, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Joanne Webb and I am the mother of three children. When it was time to enroll our children in school, my husband and I began researching schools in our neighborhood of Fort Greene, Brooklyn and discovered that we were not happy with what we found. The public schools surrounding our house were just not up to par and the chances of getting a seat at a charter school seemed slim. After all, there just are not enough seats to go around. As a result, we applied to Brooklyn Heights Montessori School, as applying for scholarships and footing the bill for the rest seemed more viable than searching in a haystack for a quality education. Unfortunately, most do not have the option to decide this for their children and are left hoping they get lucky. That is why I am submitting this testimony to you to request that you support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC.

Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Karen Pearson, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Karen Pearson and my son Caron Carlisle attends a charter school in Jamaica, NY. He is in 3rd grade and I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot.

I support charter schools because they provide a quality education and have teachers and administrators who have more professional and interactive skills. Getting a daily report on my child's education and behavior is very helpful to me. I enjoy his school because of the support they have given Caron on his transition from public school last year. Caron was behind and is now caught up because of the curriculum that his school provides. I am thankful that Caron's school is only a 10 minute commute. When we first applied for charter school, we were accepted to 3 other schools but they were in Brooklyn. I was thankful a spot opened up in Queens.

I am thankful my child was given an opportunity to attend a charter school because I was highly dissatisfied with what our local district school offers. Why not open more schools if the local schools are not performing up to standard? If charter schools eventually phase out, I feel bad for the families behind my child who have no other choice but to choose a district school that may not be giving them the best education.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Katherine Holley, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Katherine Holley and I am the mother of a teenager in his first year at a private high school named Cardinal Hayes. I chose to send my son to Cardinal Hayes because most of the high schools in the Bronx are terrible. My only other option would have been to have my son apply to high schools in Manhattan and let him travel for over two hours everyday by subway. Aside from the commute being too long, I really could not see my 14 year old son riding the train at 6:00 or 7:00 am considering how dangerous trains have become. That left private school as my only option because there are not a lot of charter schools where I live in the Bronx. With the rising cost of everything, I am barely making it. But, I will continue to make whatever sacrifices that I need to, because I cannot afford for my son to go to a failing school. Please help families like mine, who want nothing more than to see our children thrive and succeed, and support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

I thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Kathryne Marrow, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Kathryne Marrow and I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. My son, Christopher Lane, was a product of early district school learning and it was a horrible experience for us both. Educators would focus more on his behavior than his academic malnourishment. Chris found the work to be easy and would finish it quickly. At that point he'd be bored and would talk to the children near him. As a result he would be reprimanded and that really affected his ability to want to perform. Ultimately, I removed him from that environment and put him in Kipp Harlem where he was not only challenged, but encouraged to be his best self.

As a public school parent in Harlem, I experienced firsthand the challenges of identifying and successfully enrolling Chris into a quality public school. I decided to apply for charter schools because there were no decent district school options in my area and because not only did the charter school options offer better academics, but their programs included a strong social and emotional component that was non-existent in the available district school options at the time. I strongly feel that access to high-quality public school education for every child is one of the biggest civil rights issues of our time.

I am asking that you please do the right thing when negotiating this budget, and include an NYC regional charter cap lift to give children from all walks of life a chance to experience a quality education like my son has had the opportunity to experience.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Keisha Andrews, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Keisha Andrews and I am a single mother of eight children. My children have gone to several different kinds of schools. My oldest attended our zoned school, IS/MS 142. My middle children attended PS149 which was a disaster of a public school. By the time I had my youngest children, Achievement First Charter School was in my neighborhood and I wanted something different and better. When they first started at Achievement First, I knew instantly there was a difference. My children learned quicker and were more engaged than at their previous school. But more than that, the teachers and staff were more engaged. I love the charter school and I'm so thankful they were available to me and my children.

I am submitting testimony to ask that you lift the limit on the number of charter schools that are allowed to open in the city. I wish these options were available for my oldest children when they were in school. I really wish and pray that every mother could have the chance I had to send their kids to schools with real results in educating kids. It really saddens me that some families will just have to accept their situation because of a lack of more choices. That's not fair! Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, I implore you to please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Kimberly Patterson, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Kimberly Patterson and I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. I live in the Bedford Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, NY and am the mother of two charter school students and the custodial grandparent of another charter school student as well. My ninth grader attends Uncommon Charter High School, and then I have two 7th graders, one at Excellence for Boys Charter, and the other attends Bed-Stuy Collegiate Charter. In addition, I have another grandchild who is a student at Success Academy. My family made the decision to send the children to charter schools based on their needs. Every family should have the choice to decide the type of school their young scholars will attend based on their specific needs. That is why I am writing to you to request that you support an NYC regional charter cap lift. Although the number of families seeking quality charter school options has increased exponentially, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018 due to the charter cap. This is unacceptable!

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Kristian Anderson, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Kristian Anderson and I have a son by the name of Sire Swindell who attends charter school at Brownsville Leadership Prep. Sire is in 4th grade. I am submitting this testimony to encourage you to support Governor Hochul's plan to include an NYC regional charter cap lift in this year's budget. Although the number of families seeking out quality charter school options has increased dramatically, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018 due to the charter cap.

Sire's school provides many qualities that the local district school does not provide, such as two-teacher classrooms for everyone. This is great so the teacher is not overwhelmed and students can have assistance from more than one teacher and no one has to wait. Teachers are supported. They also support my child's talents and allow him room to express them. The school also provides all supplies needed for my child to learn effectively, meaning the burden isn't on me.

The downside to my situation is that we have to travel from one side of Brooklyn to another which totals a 45 minute to an hour commute. This problem could be solved by providing more charter schools in all areas where they are lacking. If we continue to actively prevent more charter schools from opening, our future generation will be lost. Our Black and Brown children are already at a disadvantage. Why not provide a quality education around the corner or across the street. Parents shouldn't have to fight for space to have quality schools in their area.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important matter.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Latoya Kitrell, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is LaToya Kitrell and I am a Principal at a NYC DOE high school. I sit on the board of a charter school and I am the mother of three children who all attend(ed) schools based on their individual needs. My oldest, who is currently in his last year at college, attended district schools his entire school career and graduated from Lincoln High School. My set of twins attended Imagine Me Charter School for elementary school and then transitioned to Achievement First. I am familiar with the stability as well as the pitfalls associated with navigating the NYC school system, so I can speak to the absolute need for parents to have as many great options accessible to them as possible.

The truth is that charter does not cancel district, rather it is a matter of fulfilling the needs of all. It is for this reason that I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity! Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please stand up for families in communities like mine as you negotiate this budget, and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

I thank you for your time and careful consideration of this extremely important matter.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Linda Hernandez, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Linda Hernandez and I am submitting this testimony to request that you lift the charter school limits in NYC. I am a single mother of one son, Ethan. When we first went to Ascend Charter School, we didn't know what to expect. But surprisingly, I found it to be exactly what we needed in Brownsville, Brooklyn. I would hope that there are good charters that provide a quality education available for everyone who wants it. But sadly, some of my friends' children are stuck in failing schools while waitlisted for a better option.

Charter schools in my opinion have definitely filled a need and void for quality education choices in neighborhoods like mine. I am hoping you will lift the cap and allow for more parents to have the choices that fit their kids' needs. If there are more charter schools that can be created, then we should pave the way for that to happen. Charter schools also have a long record of bringing quality education into all neighborhoods. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, I implore you, please be the leaders that I know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for considering this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Lisa Pierre, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Lisa Pierre and even though all of my children are finished with their K-12 education, I have 4 nieces, 2 nephews and a grandson that are still in school. Some of them go to regular public school and some of them go to charter schools. But, in each instance, their parents had the option to decide for themselves what the best option for their children was. Each of the children in my family go to great schools. I am an advocate for charter schools because different children have different needs. Two of my nieces have to travel to go to their charter school because there aren't any good schools in their neighborhood. Families should be able to send their children to a good school in their neighborhood. Children should not have to travel for an hour or more everyday just to attend a good school. I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Malik Haynes, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Malik Haynes and I am submitting this testimony to ask you to please lift the cap on charter schools in NYC. We need to have more choices for quality education. There haven't been any new charter schools opened since 2018. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight. We even have people waiting for great schools to open, but they can't because of the cap.

My daughter, Heavensse, is now in high school. But, had it not been for the charter school that came into our lives, we wouldn't have been able to get her on the path to graduation. We need every parent to have great school choices to make the best of our kids' academic future. In order to do that, we need to make as many quality schools available as possible. I support lifting the school cap and I support my governor. Now I'm asking you to support our governor and her plan to lift the cap today!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that I know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Marcine Scurlock, Public School Grandparent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Marcine Scurlock and I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap, which is an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot.

I am a grandmother of two grandchildren that attend public schools in Pennsylvania, and one grandchild that attends a charter school here in NYC. My charter school grandchild is younger than my granddaughter in Pennsylvania and her vocabulary for a 3rd grader is awesome! Whereas, my granddaughter in the 4th grade in Pennsylvania cannot even read at her grade level. Amani has learning disabilities and the same was said for my other granddaughter. But, the difference I have seen in their learning processes is that the charter school (Success Academy) ensures ample quality learning time and resources that are needed. They are already built into the school programming for all. Success Academy helps their students and gets them whatever services they may need, and children seem to be more attentive and less disruptive towards their fellow classmates. Charter schools communicate very well with the parents and we are notified about everything and everyone as a whole. They include parents in all activities. My daughter will be putting my granddaughter on a waitlist for a charter school for middle school if accepted there in 5th grade. I was a public school child myself and I wish I had more choices. Then maybe I would have made better decisions.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, I am begging you to please stand up for families like mine as you negotiate this budget and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Mary King, Public School Grandparent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Mary King and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of my granddaughters and other children in my community. We implore you to support the Governor's plan to increase the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Although the number of families seeking out quality charter school options has increased exponentially, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018 due to the charter cap. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight for quality education. Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city.

I am a lucky grandparent because my granddaughters attend PS 11. Faith is a fifth grader at PS 11 and her sister Victoria is in the first grade. They were very blessed to get a seat in that school because that is the best District 16 school. Meanwhile, many families are looking for charter school options, and some talented educators want to open schools in the city but need help to do so. I live in the heart of Bed Stuy and the district schools lag behind most of the charters with regard to math and reading test scores. If they can't make another PS 11, the next best option is a charter school.

Every family deserves to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So we implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Matty Milstein, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Matty Milstein and I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

I could understand the hesitancy to push for lifting the charter cap if we were at a point when charter schools were just entering the picture and trying to figure out what these schools are about and whether or not it is the overall best decision to allow them to open. But, we're way past that now. We are at a point in New York City where we understand that charter schools have been working for our children. When I saw how charter schools were out performing traditional public schools that have been in communities for decades, I knew where I wanted my son to go to school. Initially, I liked what I saw in Kipp. But, the waiting list for Kipp was so long that I accepted another offer for admission to Democracy Prep.

We love everything about Democracy Prep and I consider us to be lucky. There are so many families that aren't as fortunate as us and that is because of the cap on charter schools that is currently in place. Those long waiting lists should be one of the clear indicators that family's really want charter schools to be an available educational choice in their community. If what's best for NYC families is a motivating factor in your decision surrounding whether or not to support increasing the charter cap in NYC, then consider the data and please consider what actual families in our city are telling you.

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that I know you are and stand up for communities like mine by supporting the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Michael Mathews, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Michael Mathews and I am submitting this testimony to request that you lift the regional charter school caps in NYC. I am not a biological parent, but I am a very involved godfather, youth mentor, and CBO founder. I have been in Brownsville all my life. We needed the charter schools badly. Many parents in my community are very grateful for their charter schools. We needed other school choices, and when the charters came, we were super happy. I can see the difference in the education that the kids receive. It has been proven that charters work and provide a quality educational option.

Where I'm from, charter schools have been leaders in closing the education gap that we have faced for years. I'd like to see all families have the same opportunity at that quality education. I know that you all campaigned on a commitment to ensuring that your constituents have access to a quality public school for their children. I am asking that you keep that promise and lift the cap. Please be the leaders that I know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Michelle Jones, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Michelle Jones and I am submitting testimony to request that you support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot.

It is unbelievable to me that there would be any hesitation to move forward with something that is so worth having, and that provides our black and brown children with a greater chance at success in life. Charter schools are great and they provide our children with a well-rounded education. Fortunately, our children are lucky enough to be attending a great school. When my daughter, Masani, started to go to Thurgood Marshall Academy, she used to be so mean and selfish and didn't want to share. Now, she is in the 1st grade and has become very friendly. Masani is learning above her grade level and is always so excited to go to school. Her teachers are always picking her when it's time to have a school play because she reads so well and her pronunciation is great. Masani played Rosa Parks in her last school play. Unfortunately, many children and families in my community are not as fortunate. Please expand the charter school cap so many more children can experience a great educational ride like mine. Too many families in my community are stuck in failing schools and desperately need the lifeline that charter schools provide.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving communities like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Monai Swinton, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Monai Swinton and I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

Please allow us to open more charter schools in NYC. Our children need a great education. Charter schools have been a lifesaver for me and my son. My son's charter school SABx5 is a brand new small charter school in the Bronx and because of this, the students and staff are very tight-knit. This was the greatest opportunity that I had to give to my child as far as a great education. The students are seen spending time together and working as a team. My son Kadin has made a "180" when it comes to his social skills and he always wants school to be open. On any particular day when school is out, he talks about his teachers and misses his friends. Please allow other children to have these same experiences for their children. I support charter schools because they ensure that children become scholars.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you as you negotiate this budget, to please stand up for families like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Monique Baker, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Monique Baker and I am the parent of a charter school child attending Success Academy Far Rockaway. My son is in 4th grade and will be moving to middle school soon. I am so happy to have chosen charter school for my son. I was unhappy with the other schools in my community. We do have to commute, rather than being able to walk around the corner, but it has been well worth it. My son is more advanced than many of his peers and I believe that this is because of the difference in quality between the schools they attend. His peers are also bright children, but just need to be challenged. Their parents are great parents, so there is no blame there. But, their children just aren't as advanced as my son in some areas, especially reading. I do not like to compare children because they all learn differently. But, I know if all schools were performing well, no child would be behind.

Charter schools provide a space for parents to voice their opinions fairly. We have frequent chats with the principal and from what I hear, this is rare in other schools. All in all, why can't we have choices? We need to lift the charter cap to allow space for choices. I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Monique Cuthbersome, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Monique Cuthbersome and outside of my two adult children, who both graduated from traditional public high schools in Queens, NY, I also have two school aged children. The youngest of the two is in Kindergarten at Riverton Charter School and the oldest of the two is in the 8th grade at Community Voices. Yes, I am a parent that has one child in a charter school and one child in a district school and I love that I have that option because these schools are a great fit for my children. Every child is different and they each deserve to have opportunities to go to the best schools based on whatever their needs are. That is why I am writing this testimony today. I beg of you to follow through on your commitment to your constituents to ensure their access to a quality education for their children by lifting NYC's regional cap on charters. Although the number of families seeking out quality charter school options has increased dramatically, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018 due to the charter cap. Unfortunately, our children and communities are the ones who lose out.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Naturelle High, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Naturelle High and I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. We need to have a variety of good school choices available to everyone. I am not a biological parent. However, I am a caregiver to my sixteen year old goddaughter. I can say I'm glad for the charters that came into our neighborhood and gave our kids a chance to really succeed and not just go through the system. My goddaughter is on her way to graduation and we are excited about the possibilities for her future. Her success is in no small part due to us having a good quality public school choice for her education. I truly believe that the more educational choices we have will mean that more children and families will succeed academically.

I have personally experienced and attended good traditional neighborhood schools. However, charter schools have been long known for approaching educating students in "out of the box" ways. They have been proven to work for those students who may not have been able to excel with traditional learning. That's why I believe that all families should at least have charter schools as an option. There shouldn't be a cap on how many families get to have these quality choices.

I know that this issue is just as important to you as it is to me. You all have said in the past that you are committed to the mission of ensuring that all children in NYC have access to a good school. I am asking that you do that now and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC. .

Thank you.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Nicole Kilkenny, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Nicole Kilkenny and I have a 9th grade student who started out in a district school. My husband and I had to make the hard decision to pay to send him to private school when he got to middle school because despite applying and qualifying to attend quality middle schools, the Department of Education placed my son in an underperforming school that we did not apply to and at the time, getting him into a charter school was impossible. Thankfully, he was accepted to Bedford Academy for high school so he is back in a public school. I cringe at the thought of what would have happened if my husband and I were not able to afford to send our son to a private school for middle school. Families need as many quality options as possible. Please, please, please do what is needed to support an NYC regional charter cap lift and give families the chance to choose. Although the number of families seeking out quality charter school options has increased dramatically, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018 due to the charter cap.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So we implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Patrick Cabiness, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Patrick Cabiness and I am the father of two children. We live in the Fort Greene section of Brooklyn, where the elementary school PS 67 is the oldest elementary school for children of color. This school has also been a notoriously low performing school for many years now. One of my children is a District 75 student. I initially enrolled my son in PS 67, became the PTA President and worked very hard to collaborate with both school staffers and parents to turn PS 67 around. However, after some time, I realized that my son was not receiving the things that he needed and transferred him to PS 20 and then to Achievement First. Now my son is in high school and he attends Eagle Academy.

It has been a long arduous journey that could have been simpler if the local schools in my neighborhood were worth attending, but they are not. I have no preference as it relates to district versus charter schools, but absolutely require any school that my children attend to provide them with a quality education and all of the resources that they need. I believe every parent should have this choice for their children as well. This is why I am asking you to support an NYC regional lift of the charter school cap. There are still many families that do not have a choice in where they send their children to school. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Precious Graham, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Precious Graham and I am submitting testimony to request that you commit to lifting the regional charter cap we have in NYC. There are plenty of families that would love the opportunity at a better quality education. There can't be any more schools opened due to the limit and that isn't right for families that are desperately waiting for another option. If the charter cap is not lifted, the only ones who lose out are the kids and families in communities like mine. I believe that opening more charter schools is good for everyone, and we are asking that you please support lifting the cap.

My son Noah is a student at Ascend Charter School and he is thriving and excelling. I remember what schools were like for me. These new charter schools come to our underserved neighborhoods with innovative ways of providing a quality education. That is a breath of fresh air for us. Some parents get frustrated because there were no alternatives to their bad school. If we were to allow for more charters, that could eliminate the problem for a lot of families. Every family deserves a chance and a choice at a quality education. Please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Ramel Bowles, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Ramel Bowles and I am a district school parent of three children in Far Rockaway, Queens. My children are in the 3rd, 5th and 9th grades. I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

For a while now, I have been frustrated with the schools in my neighborhood. Year after year, I try to enroll my children into charter school. I currently have my 3rd grader on the waitlist for a school in Queens and for three schools in Brooklyn. However, my other children will more than likely have to stay in their current schools. Hopefully, my daughter, who is in the 3rd grade, will get a seat. I do not understand why it has to be such a fight to get better schools in our communities. For years, we have been in need and no one has heard us. You have the opportunity to make change. Please help us!

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. I am asking that you please do the right thing when negotiating this budget, and include an NYC regional charter cap lift to give children from all communities a chance to get a quality education.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Rebecca Bowen, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Rebecca Bowen and I am a charter school parent with children attending Democracy Prep. I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. My daughters, Raquel and Liyah, have been in charter school since they were in the first grade and I am so proud of my decision to put them there. I've been a children's advocate since 2003. I have directed my own child daycare facility, but I had to step down a few years after in order to raise my twins. Their academic career started in a district school, but after a year of pre-kindergarten, I decided that district school was not a good fit for my girls.

My children's charter school has laid out a plan, showed me how they were going to execute it and has an open door policy for parents that allows me to get answers in real time. I'm really happy with my girls' school and hope that other parents have the opportunity to experience quality education for their children as well.

Every family deserves to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that I know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Robyn Riabutu Mumuni Ibriham, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Robyn Riabutu Mumuni Ibriham and I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Charter schools go the extra mile to make sure my child is learning by getting the extra help she needs. As a parent of a charter school student, I was elated to have my child transferred into a charter school because she was doing very poorly in her district public school. My child was not getting the help she needed. Now that my child is in a charter school, her English vocabulary has gotten much better and her English reading has improved immensely. For me, it was the extra minutes that her teachers spent with her to make sure she was learning at her pace and basically up to speed with her classmates. Now, my child comes home from school excited about learning. In her previous district public school, she would always come home sad. She didn't understand the words because she spoke French and was new to attending public schools in New York. Her charter school had her evaluated and assigned her IEP services that helped her tremendously.

I'm forever grateful for my child's charter school. Parents should be able to place their child in a school of their choice and not have to fight a long list of bureaucracies. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, I implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Ronald Harvin, Public School Grandparent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Ronald Harvin and I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. My grandson currently attends Success Academy and we love it. He used to not want to read, but now he prefers to receive books instead of toys for Christmas. He had a difficult time in pre-k, and so his parents took him out of PS 57 and enrolled him into Success Academy. His attention is sharper, his thoughts are articulated clearly and he's excited about school. He's excited about the programs that he attends everyday. He's learning so much and making our family proud.

Traditionally, my family has always attended district schools because we could never afford the private option, and the results have not been so great. There was always overcrowding, hostility and an overall feeling of inadequacy. I think it's safe to say that many of our early choices in life are a direct result of our education. If the charter school option would have been available to us, who knows where life would have taken us. I am very thankful for charter schools and can't understand why we don't make the necessary room for them to replicate greatness. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Rondell Elliott, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Rondell Elliott and my son Kaiden Elliott attends a charter school named Storefront Academy in Harlem. I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot.

My son Kaiden has to travel for over an hour every morning to get across town to go to his school. Some mornings it is a hassle with public transportation. My son is in 1st grade and that is overwhelming sometimes for him and myself. If our community had either more high performing district schools or more charter choices, we would not have to travel so far and our commute could be shorter. Traveling with a 7 year old on the train and bus every morning is hard. Then having to go to work and travel back from Brooklyn to be on time to get him is hard as well. I know if the school across the street was more effective, I wouldn't have to endure this commute.

As a parent, I support the charter cap lift because every child deserves a quality education regardless of zip code. Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please do the right thing and stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important matter.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Samantha Newton, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Samantha Newton and all of my children went to district public schools in Fort Greene, Brooklyn. Now, I am the custodial grandparent of two of my grandchildren and both of them have gone to charter school since they started school. I can see a huge difference in the quality of their education versus the education that my children received from our neighborhood district schools. My grandchildren are challenged on a daily basis and supported in the areas where they need help. When I speak to other parents about their experience at their local district schools, it sounds similar to when my children were in a district school and that tells me I made the right choice sending my grandchildren to Achievement First. My grandchildren have an opportunity that should be extended to more families. So, I am submitting this testimony to request that you support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education and every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that I know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Satomi Smith, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Satomi Smith and I am the mother of two third graders who attend their zoned school, PS 316. Fortunately for us, PS 316 is a great school with IB accreditation because I understand the importance of getting a great education as well as the fact that my sons are starting out with the deck stacked against them simply because of the color of their skin. Unfortunately, everyone does not have the option of a great education in their zoned district school. As a result, I have many friends and family members who have opted to send their children to a charter school. Education is not one size fits all and every parent deserves the right to choose the type of school that works best for their child's needs.

I am submitting this testimony because I believe it is extremely important that you commit to supporting an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. No new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018, while the number of families looking for quality charter school options is increasing dramatically. Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Shakeshia Daughtry, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Shakeshia Daughtry and I am the mother of an 11th grader as well as a 9th grader. Both of my sons went to a charter school for elementary and junior high school because there were no decent schools in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Carnarsie where we live. Since NYC does not allow for families to enroll their children in zoned district schools outside of their neighborhood, I drove my sons across town to an Uncommon Charter School in the Bedford Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn everyday so that they could get a great education because there weren't any charter schools in my neighborhood either. Now that my sons are in high school, one goes to College Prep at Erasmus High School and the other attends South Shore High School.

The point I am making is that families like mine continue to need as many quality school options as possible, especially in Black and Latino communities, to ensure that every student gets a great education. Therefore, I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC.

Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap, while a growing number of families are seeking out charter school options for their children. Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving communities like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city.

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. As a result of my choices for my sons, they are both doing great. However, I don't know if this would be the case if I could not drive them across town and our only option was to send them to their zoned district school. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Shanta Cox, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Shanta Cox and I am a single mother of two children. I am submitting this testimony to ask that you please keep your commitment to ensure access to a quality education for all NYC families by lifting the charter school cap. I have personally seen the difference between a quality school and a school that is not good. I also know how it feels to be trapped in a school that's not good and you have no other choice but to send your kid there. With charter schools came change and relief for so many NYC parents and families. We as parents could now take a breath because we had another choice. Having that other option is a game changer for us parents who are trying to navigate the system to find a great education for our kids.

I can simply say that having more charter schools would mean more choices for parents. We all deserve to have choices in where we send our children to school. We should not have to go outside of our own neighborhood to find great public school options. Lifting the charter cap would provide that option for thousands of families. I implore you to please include a regional charter cap lift for NYC in the budget and give every family the educational tools they need to succeed.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Shaquanda Wapples, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Shaquanda Wapples and I am submitting this testimony to you to request that you support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot.

Our children and communities are the losers in this fight. It's a shame that so many children and families living in the Bronx do not have any charter schools nearby. I am a parent of a 6th grader (Nathayna Bennette) currently attending CIS303. When Nathayna started to attend public school, attending a charter was not an option because there were only two charter schools nearby and the waitlists were outrageous. I enrolled Nathanya at PS 204, a district elementary school, at the age of three. I also had an older child attending elementary school at PS 204, and when he graduated, I didn't think twice about putting him on a waitlist for a charter seat. However, it was very disappointing when he didn't get picked.

I live in the Bronx and am just starting to see charter schools pop up in and around my neighborhood. I would like to see Nathayna attend a charter school. The curriculum at charter schools is more structured and the children seem to learn a lot. But, my previous experience with my older child and dealing with the charter school waitlist process was so frustrating, that I fear I lack the energy. I will likely try to enroll Nathanya in a charter for high school. Personally, I feel that it's ridiculous that I should have to spend so much energy and fight for something that should be available to all children, regardless of where they live.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Shawina Garnett, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Shawina Garnett and I am the proud mother of three scholars who all are Uncommon Charter School students, with a 9th grader at Uncommon Collegiate Charter HS, a 7th grader at Bed Stuy Collegiate Middle School, and a 3rd grader at Leadership Prep Brownsville Elementary School. I believe in the success that charter schools create so much, that I also dedicate a considerable amount of hours volunteering and working on different committees within the charter network. My children are receiving the type of stellar education at Uncommon that all children should have access to. It should not be hoarded for a few, which is why I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC.

Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you to please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Shawn Rodriguez, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Shawn Rodriguez and I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Unfortunately, our children and communities end up the losers in this fight.

All children in my community should have access to a great education! I had four children that attended public schools and thank god they all turned out well, but not without a struggle. I remember trying to enroll my youngest son into a charter school for boys a few years back. He was waitlisted, but unfortunately was not admitted. At my son's district public school, the rules and regulations weren't taken seriously by students. It seemed as if the students were running their own programs, or as if the children were simply treated as just a seat with a body in it. Teachers appeared indifferent to whether or not their students were learning. One teacher used to say to students "I'm gonna get paid whether you're in this class today or not". The general attitude toward students was that children that were willing to learn will do so, and for the ones that act up, it's on them and their parents to deal with it once their parents see their grades. I was hoping that one day the charter school, for which my son was waitlisted, would call me for a seat for my son, but the time never arrived.

I think it's a problem that children and families are zoned in such a way that severely limits their options. I was frustrated that my son was not accepted to the charter school, especially when I'd see the children that were accepted maturing right before my eyes. The charter school was making these little people responsible for one another. They were taught better than children in the district school and they were far more accountable as a whole. The friendships and bonds between the children in charter school were strong. Meanwhile, my son struggled after high school with his social and emotional feelings and development. Attending district public school made him not want to be social because there was major gang activity going on at that time. He survived the streets, but the charter school students had exciting after-school programs for the children that public schools didn't offer. I remember thinking to myself how things might be different for my child if only he'd had a better experience growing up in high school and with classes and academics to do after school and great educational opportunities. I believe charter schools help children realize their dreams. They're pushed to be great and they offer so much more than a trip to Central Park. I heard that Democracy Prep has a change the world program where children actually go on a school-paid vacation to see how they can change the world. As one mom stated, you can't change something you have never seen. Programs like this change a child's whole life with the great experiences that charter schools give a child. My children

never attended charter school. I felt like the one parent whose wish never came true because of my zone. Charter schools should be an option for me and my family and I should have representatives/legislators that will back me up and ensure I have quality charter school options. If I had another child, I would fight tooth and nail and would make sure they were on a waiting list for a charter school.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families and communities like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be a cap lift for charter schools in all boroughs and parents should be able to decide where their child attends school, not their address, their nationality, or the color of their skin. If I ever have grandchildren, they will be charter school ready on all waiting lists, mailing lists, etc.

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Shawntiqua Murphy, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Shawntiqua Murphy and my daughter goes to an independent charter school because our zoned school, PS 67, is not a good school. My daughter is very smart and she works hard at doing well in school. So, why should she be stuck going to a failing school? Why should anybody's child be stuck at a failing school? PS 67 is failing so badly that it shares its building with two other charter schools. In a perfect world, schools like PS 67 would be able to handle teaching all of the students in their building. But, this is not a perfect world and children need to be in classrooms where they are learning everyday. My daughter's charter school makes sure that happens. That is why I think you should support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you, please be the leaders that I know you are and lift the regional cap on NYC charter schools.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Taisha Parks, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Taisha Parks and I am proud to say that I have two school aged children. My daughter is in the 10th grade at Uncommon Collegiate High School and my son is in the 11th grade at Poly Tech High School. As the mother of children in both charter and district schools, I am committed to fighting for quality education for all children regardless of the type of school that best suits their individual needs and you should be too. I am writing to request that you follow through on your commitment to provide access to a quality public school education for all NYC families and support a regional cap lift on NYC charter schools. Although the number of families seeking out quality charter school options has dramatically increased, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018 due to the charter cap, and this is a tremendous shame.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Tanisha Valentine, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Tanisha Valentine and my daughter, Ashley Valentine, attends Brooklyn Excelsior Charter School in Brooklyn, NY. She is in the 4th grade and we love it! The principal is interactive and helpful. We reside in Astoria, Queens and travel daily to get her to school. Sometimes, that can be a two hour commute. I hope parents such as myself eventually receive the choices we want in our very own neighborhoods instead of having to travel. We need to lift the charter cap around the city to ensure parents have quality choices.

I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you to please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Terina Bruce, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Terina Bruce and I am the mother of an 8th grader who is doing very well in school now that he attends Achievement First. I transferred my son to Achievement First when he was in middle school because he was struggling in every subject at Roberta Clemente PS 13, and not receiving the help he needed to catch up. Achievement First made sure he received everything he needed to catch up and continues to meet him where he is. Charter schools are necessary for many children and more are needed. That is why I am submitting this testimony to implore you to support a regional cap lift for NYC charter schools. Although the number of families seeking out quality charter school options has increased exponentially, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018 due to the charter cap. This is preventing so many NYC children from getting to experience the same quality of education that my son receives at Achievement First.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Tiffany Griffin, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Tiffany Griffin and my son, Za'ron, and daughter, Keiyanah Bratton, attend a failing District 28 school. I did not choose the middle school that my kids are attending, but they were of course placed in the school they are attending because it's their "district"/zoned school. As parents, we always want the best for our children and it starts with them having the tools needed to guide and set them up for life. With the "Cap" limiting great public school options in NYC, my children, and children throughout NYC, are not afforded the best education possible. If we lifted the "Cap", my children, as well as other children in the surrounding neighborhoods, could get the best education possible to help them to succeed in life.

Education is key, and without the best available to our children, they can fall into being unproductive citizens in society. I believe that if we follow through with our commitment to give our kids access to a quality public school option by supporting an NYC charter cap lift, my children and others can have a brighter future. In traditional public schools, children are subjected to teachers who are not as engaged as they are in charter schools. The charter school network seems genuinely avid about education. Teachers are invested in their students and held accountable if they are not.

With all that being said, I am submitting this testimony today in hopes that you will support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC, because what's the use of giving choices on what school you want your child to attend if you really do not have "school choice". There should not be a cap on excellence! All families should have the option to choose what is best for their child, and every child deserves a quality education. So, I implore you, please be the leaders that we know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Tonya Hardy, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Tonya Hardy and my son, Xavier Hardy, attends district school at PS 80 located in Jamaica, Queens New York. I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Although the number of families seeking out quality charter school options has increased exponentially, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018 due to the charter cap. And unfortunately, our children and communities end up the losers.

My story is different from my friends in my neighborhood. My son is receiving a great education at his school. I have a great relationship with the administrators and everything . However, that is because I moved from one part of Queens to another. Before I moved to Rochdale, Queens, my son was in a horrible school. The administrators were always unavailable and bullying was out of hand. I have seen the difference between my son's education and that of my friends' children. I am a big supporter of charter school because I have seen what it has done for my nieces and nephews. I just do not have any local charter schools around me and I do not drive. If this was an option locally, I would take it. It is unfair that thousands of parents, who do not have any other choice, are forced to put their children in the zoned school that is under performing and failing most of our students. We cannot wait any longer. There is no good reason for not having opened any new charter schools in NYC since 2018. Why hold up the process? More charter schools are desperately needed. This is what the parents are looking for, and this is why we vote. Please pay attention to us!

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you to please be the leaders that I know you are and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Topaz Jacobs, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Topaz Jacobs and I am the parent of district school students in grades 11th , 7th, 6th and 4th. We reside in Brooklyn, NY and I am submitting this testimony to urge you to support an increase in the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot.

My children have had to struggle, switching from school to school. I had them in a great charter school. But, due to travel constraints and my work schedule, I had to ultimately put them in the zoned school close to our house. If we had more charter schools nearby, I would have never had this issue at all. We need school choice NOW!

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So I implore you to please stand up for communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Tyani Little, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Tyani Little and I am a single mother of one son. I grew up, and attended public school, in East New York, Brooklyn. After graduating high school, I went on to college. When I became a mother, I wanted the best for my children. The public schools now are not the same as they were when I grew up. It is very difficult to find a quality public school education nowadays. My son currently attends Achievement First Charter School and it is a great fit for us. I want every parent to be able to find the right fit for their child. That is why I'm asking that you lift the charter school cap. We need as many quality public school options as we can get!

Charter schools have been providing parents with quality public school options in marginalized communities for a long time. They have been committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. The more families that can benefit from more quality options the better! Please be the leaders that we know you are and stand up for communities like mine by supporting the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Uko Chaulk, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Uko Chaulk and I am the father of a 9th grade student that goes to Polytech High School and a 7 year old that goes to PS 11 in Brooklyn, New York. Although my family is fortunate in that our children currently attend decent schools, we have had our share of days where we had to forcefully advocate for our older children on a consistent basis, just so that they would receive the basics of education. If I had to attribute this to any singular thing, it would be the lack of quality school options within the NYC public school system.

I am submitting this testimony in support of increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. From what I have seen, charter schools are creating a much needed balance and in some cases even forcing under-performing schools to do better. They are raising the bar for all of New York's public schools. I often wonder why any school that is underperforming should be allowed to stay in operation. In my opinion, we need to make more charter school opportunities available and parents should be able to decide for themselves which type of school is best for their child. However, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC since 2018 due to the cap, while a growing number of families are desperately looking for charter school options in their communities.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They are committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity. Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Zaynah Williams, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Zaynah Williams and I am the mother of two boys who mean the world to me. Education is very important to me and when I lived in the Fort Greene section of Brooklyn, I had to fight really hard to get my son who has an IEP out of his failing elementary school because they were not meeting his needs. I was finally able to get him into Achievement First through a school lottery system. But, my question is, why does getting a good education have to be so hard for some of us? Why are seats in good schools limited to a few? I ask this because charter schools offer a good education but they are limited in seats. District schools have to enroll your child, but whether or not your child gets a good education depends on where you live. Now I live in lower Manhattan, so my children are able to go to their zoned school. It is a shame how much better the district school my children go to now is over the district school in Fort Greene, Brooklyn. I do not believe that is by accident. Neighborhoods like Fort Greene need a lifeline when it comes to education. Charter schools bridge the gap where quality is missing in failing district schools.

Please follow through on your commitment to providing all NYC children and families with a quality public school education by lifting NYC's regional charter cap. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. I am asking that you please do the right thing when negotiating this budget, and include an NYC regional charter cap lift to give children in communities like mine a fair shot..

I thank you for your consideration.

Testimony on the FY2023-24 Executive Budget Proposal
NYS Legislature Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education
Zulika Bumpus, Public School Parent
February 8, 2023

Chairpersons of the Senate & Assembly Committees on Finance, Ways & Means, and Education:

My name is Zulika Bumpus and I am the mother of three. Navigating the education system in NYC has been difficult from the start because schools are not created equal, with the best schools being housed outside of my community in most instances. In most cases, charter schools are one of the few options available to all families, and their seats are limited to the number of students that they have seats for. Thankfully for me, my children have the academic skill set to be able to pass tests at a high level and be admitted into schools with a selective admissions process. Otherwise, I would be limited on options. Getting a good K-12 education should not be more difficult than getting into college. Parents need more options. So, I am writing this testimony to implore you to support increasing the number of charter schools that can open in NYC. Since 2018, no new charter schools have been able to open in NYC due to the cap - an arbitrary number invented by politicians, not parents. Meanwhile, a growing number of families are looking for charter school options, and there are talented educators who want to open schools in the city but cannot. Our children and communities are the losers in this fight.

Charter schools have long been a leader in driving equity in public education. They have committed to serving families like mine by providing high-quality public school choices across the city. They would extend those opportunities to even more families, if they could. There should be no cap on excellence and opportunity!

Every family deserves the chance to choose which kind of public education works best for their child. So, as you negotiate this budget, please stand up for families in communities like mine and support the Governor's plan to get rid of regional limits on charter schools in NYC.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.