

Garry R. Smith

District No. 27 - Greenville County
210 Foxhound Road
Simpsonville, SC 29680
(864) 963-0337



534 Blatt Building
Columbia, SC 29201
Tel. (803) 734-3141
Fax (803) 734-0487

Committees:

Operations and Management
Committee, Chairman
Ways and Means Committee
Property Tax Subcommittee,
Chairman
Public Education Subcommittee
Legislative Audit Council,
Member

House of Representatives

State of South Carolina

September 28, 2021

The Honorable Speaker James H. "Jay" Lucas
South Carolina House of Representatives
506 Blatt Building
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Speaker Lucas:

Our traditional K-12 education system in South Carolina has seen an influx of over **\$3 billion** in emergency funding. Nevertheless, parents have been left to struggle through education disruptions on their own. If this pandemic has taught us anything, it is that parents of all income levels must be empowered to **choose the education** that is right for *their* child.

Gold-standard research of real experience has proven that when parents have an education choice, their students have a better chance at success. Thankfully, our fellow-lawmakers from across the country are reading the research and listening to the voices of parents who strongly support these programs:

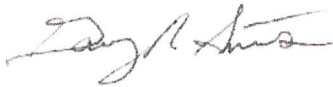
- With the COVID-19 pandemic pushing more families to demand educational options for their kids, polling data from RealClear Opinion Research shows that from April 2020 to June 2021, **support for school choice jumped from 64% to 74%**.
- 2021 has been rightly dubbed "The Year of School Choice." A tidal wave of states has acted—**18 states have adopted 30 new or expanded school choice programs already this year. Even more states, including South Carolina, have school choice legislation in play for 2022.**

As you know, **63** other House members have joined you as co-sponsors of **H.3976**, which would bring **Education Scholarship Accounts (ESAs)**—and the unprecedented education opportunity they deliver—to students across our state.

ESAs are the vanguard of school choice programs, by far the most innovative, constitutional, flexible, and parent-controlled form of education choice that exists. **We are proud to stand with you in support of this critical House Caucus Agenda item and ask you to help bring H. 3976 to the floor as a top priority in January, in order to give the Senate time to act.**

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your strong leadership on education reform efforts, particularly school choice. Please put your shoulder to the wheel to help us provide ESAs to parents as another tool in South Carolina's education toolbox. Together, we can make 2022 a year of unprecedented education freedom for parents and empower our students meet their full, God-given potential.

Sincerely,



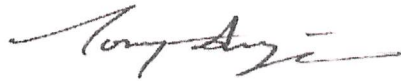
Representative Garry Smith



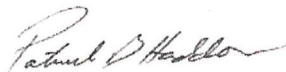
Representative Mark Willis



Representative Mike Burns



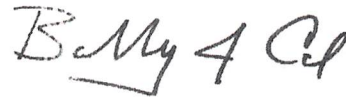
Representative Tommy Stringer



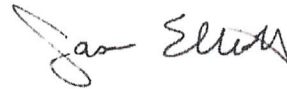
Representative Patrick Haddon



Representative Adam Morgan



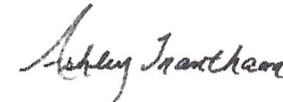
Representative Bobby Cox



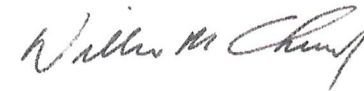
Representative Jason Elliott



Representative Bruce Bannister



Representative Ashley Trantham



Representative Bill Chumley