



MEDIA RELEASE

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Charter Institute at Erskine represented at school choice roundtable hosted by U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos

GREENVILLE – Charter Institute at Erskine CEO Cameron Runyan participated in a roundtable discussion with several legislators and education leaders regarding a scholarship proposal in Taylors on July 18. The discussion, held at Hidden Treasure Christian School, was led by U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, Governor Henry McMaster, and State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman.

The proposal called “Education Freedom Scholarships” is designed to allow states a way to structure a scholarship program that is 100% privately funded by donations. Education Freedom Scholarships will provide a \$5 billion annual federal tax credit for voluntary donations to state-based scholarship programs. This proposal would empower students and families to choose the best educational setting for them – regardless of where they live, how much they make, and how they learn.

“All students should have the freedom to pursue an education that develops their talents, unleashes their unique potential, and prepares them for a successful life,” DeVos said.

The scholarships are designed to help students access variety of opportunities, including transportation to education providers. Charter schools in South Carolina do not receive funding for transportation. Transportation is critical in opening school options for many families.

Runyan said the scholarship proposal could have a significant positive impact on the future of charter schools in South Carolina.

“Charter schools are going into some of the most need-based communities of South Carolina, they are serving students, and changing family trees,” Runyan explained at the discussion. “The challenge in these areas is families getting their children to the school. Having the State’s involvement with the resources of these scholarships supplementing transportation funds is encouraging to see.”

In addition to transportation, other ways the scholarship could have an impact include advanced, remedial, and elective courses; apprenticeships and industry certifications; concurrent and dual-enrollment; private and home education; special education services and therapies; tutoring; and summer and after-school education programs. Each participating state will determine how it will structure its program, including eligible students, education providers, and education expenses.

For more information regarding the Education Freedom Scholarships, please visit www.ed.gov/freedom.

180-year-old Erskine College established the Charter Institute at Erskine in 2017 to improve public education across the state of South Carolina. The Institute currently authorizes 17 charter schools with nearly 11,000 students. For more information, please visit www.erskinecharters.org.

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