

Testimony of Seferash Teferra
to the
House Oversight and Government Reform Committee
May 14, 2015
Archbishop Carroll High School

Good morning Chairman Chaffetz, Congressmen, Staff, Parents and Students. My name is Seferash Teferra and I am a Ward 4 resident of the District of Columbia. I have lived in the District of Columbia for the past 12 years.

I have one child, Yalemwork Teferra.. We are an Opportunity Scholarship family and this is currently our second year taking advantage of this wonderful program. My child was a student for 8 years at E.L. Haynes public charter school.

Yalemwork was not being pushed to her full intellectual capacity. She was always ahead and despite our endless fight for more challenging classes and material for advanced students, the school failed to meet our needs. In addition, Yalemwork felt isolated from the community and did not view it as an optimal place to learn.

My daughter has massive potential and a love for learning that my income could not accommodate. Yalemwork had her eye set on Sidwell for a long time, and we hoped that the OSP program would be financially able to help her dreams come true.

Because of the OSP, Yalemwork is in an academic community where she is thriving. She not only loves the school immensely and is so passionate about learning, but she is head of 3 clubs and started one of her own. In addition, she does volunteer work both in and out of her school, and is a friendly face in the community.

Yalemwork is incredibly involved in the activism scene at her school, and is involved in all social justice issues. She is not only a part of FEM: female empowerment mission, BSU: black student union, Debate Team, the Democratic Club, Civil Eyes (a club dedicated to combating issues of racial and gender inequality) but has started her own club called BASA (brothers and sisters in Africa) to help address issues prevalent in Africa, and allow the important discussion of Africa's rich history and current oppression to be addressed in the Sidwell community. Her heavy involvement in the social justice scene at her school has sparked her interest in politics.

Yalemwork would not have had the opportunity to attend Sidwell, as my income was not able to support her, and pay for her tuition were it not for the OSP.

Honestly I believe that the sky is the limit regarding Yalemwork's future thanks to the help of the OSP. Her attending Sidwell has allowed her to realize her full potential and allowed her passions to flourish.

The Opportunity Scholarship Program is an amazing program that helps people like my daughter Yalemwork let their dreams come true.

The government and all elected officials should absolutely back this program so it can help the many financially struggling youth reach their full potential, and allow their dreams to come true. I cannot believe there are some people who do not support this program and would doubt its ability to help families choose a path best suited to their individual child's education.

Please members of Congress continue to support the Opportunity Scholarship Program so it can continue the amazing work it does in transforming our young people's lives!!!