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THE OFFICE OF TIBET

SF2255 Testimony of Office of Tibet, Washington D.C.

Date: March 31, 2025

This testimony is presented by Representative Dr. Namgyal Choedup of the Office of Tibet, Washington D.C. in reference to budget cuts to Minnesota charter school funding proposed by Governor Walz.

Tashi Delek! As the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration to North America, I am writing this letter to support charter schools including the Ocean of Wisdom charter school which is driven by the vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to promote the education of not just the brain but our hearts.

The Office of Tibet strongly supports preserving funding for underserved and “at-risk” students and continuing Minnesota’s important record of educational innovations in the charter school arena. Charter schools in Minnesota have given critical educational support and opportunities to immigrant students with high-quality general education, language education, and effective teacher-family involvement for a wide array of students in atmospheres that foster intellectual curiosity, dignity, and learning efficacy.

This testimony also supports Ocean of Wisdom School, a Charter School developed to serve all families and student-enrollees as a K-4th grade school in Fall 2025 and which will add a grade in subsequent years up to 8th grade. The Tibetan-American community in Minnesota has five-thousand-plus members. A diverse group of educators and professionals has collaborated with the charter school Authorizer, NEO, and the Minnesota Department of Education to create Ocean of Wisdom School (OWS), which will offer a strong general curriculum and SEE (Social, Emotional and Ethical) Learning, an evidence-based curriculum from Emory University and Nobel Peace Laureate, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which focuses on the development of the whole child, developing academic skills as well as social, emotional and ethical competencies using learning, logic and reason. SEE Learning has been implemented successfully across the globe, and OWS will be the first to fully incorporate SEE Learning in the USA. We know that Ocean of Wisdom School will add great educational and civic value to our larger Community by helping students become more than well-educated, but also wise and compassionate citizens in a world that is ever more complex.

One of the important responsibilities of my office is to preserve the vulnerable Tibetan language among Tibetan-American youths in the US. The Chinese government's systematic assimilative policies in Tibet have severely endangered Tibetan language in Tibet, therefore, our diaspora communities have become the crucial guardians of this ancient Tibetan linguistic heritage. Ocean of Wisdom School represents a historic opportunity—becoming the first institution to offer formal Tibetan language instruction alongside the innovative SEE Learning curriculum.

While charter schools are currently asked to operate with 30% less funding than their public school counterparts, we implore Governor Walz to suspend plans for further budget cuts affecting charter schools. Charter schools and our charter school students cannot bear the weight of these funding cuts.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Namgyal Choedup
Representative



Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and
Central Tibetan Administration to North America