

President Obama: Actions Speak Louder Than Words.

Stop denying children access to better schools.

“For a mom or a dad who are working hard but don’t have a bunch of connections [or] don’t have a lot of choice in terms of where they live, they should be getting the same quality of education for their kids as anybody else. And we don’t have that yet.”

–President Barack Obama, *NBC Today*, 9/27/10



An Open Letter to President Barack Obama

Kevin P. Chavous

Chairman, Black Alliance for Educational Options

Dear Mr. President:

One of the reasons I supported you, as did virtually all of the Black community in this country, is because we believed that you would stand up to vested interests and do the right thing even if it was not politically expedient. **You have now left us confused and dismayed.**

We simply cannot reconcile what you are saying about education reform with what you are actually doing to give parents the opportunity to choose the best schools for their children.

Last year, you refused to support the reauthorization of the District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program. As you know, this program allows low-income parents to receive government-funded scholarships so their children can attend private schools of their choice. This initiative has been an educational lifeline to thousands of children.

You acted to eliminate hope for thousands of low-income children who live just blocks from the White House, despite compelling data that confirms these children are receiving a better education than they would receive in the D.C. public schools.

While opposing this program would appear to be a contradiction to what you said on the *Today* show earlier this week, some might call it the **height of hypocrisy**. As a beneficiary of a privately funded scholarship, you attended the most elite private school in Hawaii. You and Mrs. Obama have also chosen a private school for your own children. Because there is not enough money to provide private scholarships to all low-income families, you more than anyone should be an advocate for government-funded opportunity scholarships nationwide.

Far too many of our children are confined in schools that continue to fail, year after year. As Dr. Martin Luther King said during the civil rights movement, we need to act with the fierce urgency of now. **Our children cannot wait. Opportunity scholarships help educate kids today.**

So, Mr. President, there is still time for you to throw off the shackles of the educational establishment and join our ranks. There are over one million empty urban private school seats in this country that are waiting to be filled if low-income families had government-funded scholarships. If you would like to learn more about our work at the Black Alliance for Educational Options or would like to meet some of the families who would like to participate in these programs, I would be happy to introduce them to you.

Please, Mr. President, let’s educate our children by any means necessary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin P. Chavous". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kevin P. Chavous
Board Chair
Black Alliance for Educational Options

**Join our fight for educational equality.
www.RevolutionInEducation.org**