

# General Opportunity Summary

- Charter school enrollment increased by 1.7 million students between 2006 and 2015, but behind this data point lies significant thwarted demand. As Jeanne Allen explains: “Once the most promising public school reform available to students, charter schools have stalled. From 1993–2009, the number of charter schools grew from 10 percent–15 percent each year. In the 2015 school year, the number of charters increased by just 7 percent. In 2016, school growth dropped dramatically to 2 percent. All the while, charter school enrollment has grown steadily each year. However, that masks the real story: Demands for charter opportunities outstrip supply by at least a million students.”
- Unemployment has declined almost to where it was 10 years ago, but there’s more to the story, says Rachel Greszler. “According to the topline unemployment rate, the labor market is doing fairly well. At 4.2 percent, unemployment among individuals 25–54 years old is near its ‘natural’ rate. But the unemployment rate does not reveal the millions of people who have dropped out of the labor force, stopped looking for work, or turned to disability insurance as an unemployment or early retirement program.”
- The employment-to-population ratio for those of prime working age (25–54) fell 1.9 percentage points between 2006 and 2016. This measure captures an important facet of our political climate that the

## General Opportunity Indicators

	RIGHT TRACK	WRONG TRACK
Reading Proficiency (p. 66)	●	
Charter School Enrollment (p. 68)	●	
Private School Choice Participation (p. 70)	●	
High School Graduation Rate (p. 72)	●	
Student Loan Debt (p. 74)		○
Employment-Population Ratio (p. 76)		○
Unemployment Rate (p. 78)		○
Job Openings Rate (p. 80)	●	
Job Hires Rate (p. 81)		○
Money Taxed Away by Federal Government (p. 82)		○
Start-Up Job Share (p. 84)		○
Major Federal Regulations (p. 86)		○
Economic Freedom (p. 88)		○

unemployment rate does not, explains Henry Olsen. The focus on the latter “might have been warranted once, but today, the official unemployment rate does not accurately depict what is happening to American workers. That is because one is counted as unemployed only if one is not employed and is actively seeking a job (what economists call ‘labor force participation’). If things are so bad that you are not even looking for a job, the unemployment rate does not capture your despair.”