



the
CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM

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From the Desk of... Jeanne Allen, Founder, Senior Fellow & President Emeritus

Dear Charter School Educator,

I am writing with urgent news about Governor Larry Hogan's bill to improve the charter school law for parents and educators. As a long time Maryland resident and founder of The Center for Education Reform, with whom I have advocated for YOU and great educational options for 21+ years, I can tell you that passage of this bill is *critical* to your being able to teach without expanded bureaucracy from school boards and district personnel.

As a teacher, you know the value and importance of professionalism and integrity. The falsehoods being spread about the proposed charter bill represent the opposite. The **truth** is this:

Maryland's current charter school law, which enabled your school to open, is notwithstanding the weakest in the nation, by many standards. First, it gives your own nonprofit school board no authority over how it helps and trains you, leaving all decision-making regarding hiring and retention, training, operations and even professional development, to district bureaucrats and provisions in union contracts. People who are not even in your school are making decisions about you every day!

The bill they want you to oppose would provide more opportunity for you to play a role in leading your school by creating more room for professional growth as well as pay incentives.

Currently, MD permits the district to pay charters less than 80¢ on the dollar for school operations! The Hogan proposal reestablishes that charters get at least 98% operational funds.

The bill your district and union want you to oppose gives the State Board of Education appeal power over school districts when charter proposals are arbitrarily rejected. That's important because often times school board members don't understand education and why certain proposals might benefit kids in their district. Establishing an objective, binding appeals process would strengthen and encourage the growth of high-quality charter schools.

Finally, the bill before the Maryland General Assembly would give teachers POWER to CHOOSE to either stay as part of the existing collective bargaining unit, form their own, or to not associate with a union at all.

Freedom to choose how you work and under what conditions? Now, *that's* a concept!

I urge you to take time RIGHT NOW to write your legislators (<http://p2a.co/sn5w89w>), your school district and your governor. Tell them you support greater charter school freedoms and that the unions do not represent you when it comes to this effort.

Without your help, Maryland will not change, our schools will not progress and your opportunities to advance critical options for parents, teachers and students will be gone. Please feel free to email me directly at jamail@edreform.com, or call CER at 202-750-0016 if you have questions or can help.

Thank you,
Jeanne

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CHARTER SCHOOLS: FACT SHEET

Did you know...?

- ...The nation's first charter school was opened in St. Paul, MN, in 1992 by a union teacher named Milo Cutter, who felt strongly that it should be the choice of teachers, not a mandate, to collectively bargain?

She, like so many educators across this country felt constrained by rules that were negotiated for her by the school district with union leadership. She sought, as do your charter schools' founders, to provide more opportunity for educators, not fewer. Contracts limit the amount of benefits you receive, the pay you are permitted and your opportunities for growth.

- ...Forty-two states plus the District of Columbia have charter school laws, and only three states, including Maryland, mandate that charter teachers are employees of their district as opposed to their charter school and are forbidden from creating their own bargaining unit or opting out of the union?

In fact, more than three-fourths of the 6,700 charter schools operate in states without district control. Instead, authorizers, including state universities, state boards and the charter school governing boards, weave a tight and welcoming accountability fabric around charter schools which provide support and advancement opportunities for their teachers.

- ...Charter schools enjoy support from not only Governor Larry Hogan and numerous state lawmakers, but from U.S. Presidents Clinton through Obama? The national Urban League supports charter schools, as does the National Council of La Raza and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The Washington Post and *Baltimore Sun* have endorsed charter schools, considered a mainstream public education reform that unites over 2.5 million students, their parents and 800,000 teachers across the country.

- ...The proposed Maryland charter school bill changes only four things in the law, all of which are necessary to both help expand existing schools and help grow new ones?

Expanded schools increase revenue to public education, from within and outside the state, allowing teachers more access to funds, not less. New schools permit teachers more opportunities to grow and learn. Proven, highly accountable charter schools give vital options to parents whose students don't fit into the conventional school, who seek a different environment or perhaps simply need a better fit.

So what's the union so afraid of? Why are they telling you to oppose this effort? Because the Maryland State Education Association might lose members if you have a choice. They are not objective, and no union in any state or nationally has ever supported a charter school bill, yet they've passed and thrived despite their heavy handed opposition in every state.

Don't let the union speak for you – speak up now – and write your legislators and the Governor and tell him you want more and better schooling options for your own family, educators like you and the children of our state.