

Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1505 – charter schools: petitions – oppose
AB1506 – charter schools: statewide total: authorization restrictions – oppose
AB1507 – charter schools: location – oppose

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez:

We are locally elected school board members who are writing in opposition to Assembly Bill 1505, which seeks to deny charter schools the opportunity to appeal their authorization, renewal or other key decisions to an authority higher than the local governing board; AB 1506, which seeks to stop the growth of charter schools by establishing a statewide and local cap on future expansion; and AB 1507, which prohibits any charter school from being established outside the charter-granting district's boundaries.

Under current charter school law, districts are compelled to grant charters unless there are considerable justifications to deny. If the original or renewal charter is denied, the petitioner may appeal to both the county and state boards of education. AB 1505 would eliminate all such rights of appeal, unless the issue for appeal is procedural, leaving charter petitioners subject to the sole discretion of local school districts, who would no longer need to make specified findings to justify denial of a charter.

While there is no lifetime cap on charter schools, there is an annual cap of 100 new schools. Although the 2018-19 statewide cap is 2,250, the current number of charter schools operating in California is 1,317 because the annual increase of 100 charter schools has not been actualized on an annual basis. AB 1506 would set the statewide cap on charter schools at the authorized number on January 1, 2020. After that time, a charter school could only be opened when another charter school closes, making it impossible for the number of charter schools operating in California to ever increase – even in cases where there is clear need.

There are about 630,000 students currently enrolled in California's charter schools. Since 1992, the Charter School Law has increased options for parents seeking a better educational experience for their children. According to Emily Langhorne in Forbes Magazine (8/23/18), "the charter formula—autonomy, accountability, diversity of learning models, choice and operation by nonprofits—is transforming urban education. In states with strong charter laws and equally strong authorizers, charter schools have produced impressive students gains, especially in schools with high-minority, high-poverty populations."

Charter schools are an important part of our communities and it is critical we continue to encourage their innovation, not stifle modernization. The growth of charter schools over the last three decades has clearly shown parents and students want a say in their educational choices. This package of bills would severely restrict the growth of charter schools and shift focus from the reason charter schools were originally started—to give our children access to highest quality education available.

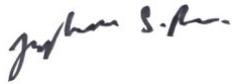
Governor Newsom recently directed Tony Thurmond, Superintendent of Public Instruction, to gather a panel of experts to examine financial and other impacts of charter schools. Therefore, we

believe these bills are premature given that the Governor's Charter Task Force has not had sufficient time to complete their report with recommended reforms to the Charter School Law.

For these reasons, we respectfully oppose AB 1505, 1506, and 1507 and ask for your "no" vote.

Sincerely,

Jag Bains



Governing Board Member
Natomas Unified School District
jbains@natomasunified.org
(916) 567-5400

Micah Grant



Governing Board Member
Natomas Unified School District
mgrant@natomasunified.org
(916) 567-5400

Joshua Hoover



Governing Board Member
Folsom-Cordova Unified School District
(916) 294-9000
jhoover@fcusd.org