

Resolution for Continued Prohibition of Charter Schools in Washington State

Whereas the platforms of the King County Democrats and the Washington State Democrats specifically oppose publicly funded charter schools and vouchers; and

Whereas the voters of Washington State have defeated charter measures three times¹; and

Whereas peer-reviewed research shows that 83% of charter schools perform no better than public schools;² and

Whereas charter schools often serve only a select group of students; and

Whereas some charter schools shift public moneys to private for-profit firms; and

Whereas Washington State is experiencing a prolonged fiscal and budgetary crisis; while charter school legislation would require substantial additional revenue; and

Whereas children with special needs are rarely allowed access to charter schools³; students who do not meet school performance goals are “counseled out” of charter schools⁴; and charter school populations are more segregated and less diverse than public schools⁵; and

Whereas charter schools receive public funds but receive limited local or state oversight⁶; and

Whereas the financial instability of charter schools causes many of them to fail and close, creating greater instability in a community; and

Whereas charter schools often hire less qualified and inexperienced teachers to control their costs; and

Whereas charter school teachers are required to work longer hours and take on additional responsibilities with the same or less pay than their counterparts in public schools; and

Whereas many charter schools outsource the administrative duties to unknown profit-making entities⁷; and

Whereas students are required to compete for positions in charter schools, rather than being admitted by the first-come, first-served policy that public schools uphold;

Therefore, be it resolved that we Democrats strongly advocate for continued prohibition of charter schools in Washington State, and

Be it further resolved that we Democrats (1) reject the emphasis on charter schools as the vanguard approach for the education of children, instead of focusing attention, funding, and policy advocacy on improving existing public schools and (2) will work through local, state and federal legislative processes to ensure that all public schools are provided the necessary funding and support necessary to educate all students; and

Be it finally resolved that we Democrats urge our legislators to oppose charter schools and to work to support and adequately fund public schools to educate all children to their highest potential.

Adopted January 24, 2012, by King County Democratic Central Committee

¹ Referendum 55 (2004), 58.3% No, 41.7% Yes; Initiative 729 (2000), 52% No, 48% yes; Initiative 177 (1996), 64% No, 36% Yes.

² "Multiple Choice: Charter School Performance in 16 States," CREDO at Stanford University, June 2009 (http://credo.stanford.edu/reports/MULTIPLE_CHOICE_CREDO.pdf); Matthew Di Carlo, "The Evidence on Charter Schools and Test Scores," Albert Shanker Institute, December 2011. (<http://shankerblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/CharterReview.pdf>).

³ "Special Education in New Orleans Public Schools," Southern Poverty Law Center, December 12, 2010 (<http://www.splcenter.org/access-denied/special-education-in-new-orleans-public-schools>).

⁴ Rachel Cohen, "Charter Schools Cook the Books", *The Socialist Worker*, July 15, 2010 (<http://socialistworker.org/2010/07/15charter-cooks-the-books>)

⁵ Gary Miron, Jessica L. Urschel, William J. Mathis, and Elana Tornquist, "Schools without Diversity: Education Management Organizations, Charter Schools, and the Demographic Stratification of the American School System," Education and the Public Interest Center, University of Colorado at Boulder, February 5, 2010. (<http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/EMO-Seg.pdf>); Julia James, "UCLA Report Says Charters Are Causing Resegregation of American Schools," USC Annenberg School for Communications & Journalism, April 9, 2010. (http://blogs.uscannenberg.org/julia_james/2010/04/ucla-report-says-charters-are.html)

⁶ Scott Haasen and Kathleen McGrory, "Florida Charter Schools: Big Money, Little Oversight," *Miami Herald*, December 12, 2011. (http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/09/19/2541051/florida-charter-schools-big-money.html?story_link=email_msg); Diane Ravitch, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), pp. 121-22.

⁷ Jennifer de Vallance, "National Study of Charter School Management Finds Varying Practices and Impacts," Mathematica Policy Research, November 4, 2011. (http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/Newsroom/Releases/2011/CMO_11_11.asp)