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Legislative and Political Action Department

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Danny Donohue, President

OPPOSE

January 12, 2010

FULL SENATE / FULL ASSEMBLY

MEMORANDUM

IN

OPPOSITION

TO

Governor's Program Bill #214 – Eliminating the Charter School Cap

CSEA is adamantly opposed to the Governor's Program Bill that eliminates the cap on charter schools in New York State. Charter schools drain funds away from school districts and place additional strains on our public school system. This isn't the time to make a rush judgment that could jeopardize the future of our children's education in New York State.

It is important that we dispel the erroneous myth that the Race to the Top Funding is contingent upon eliminating a cap on charter schools. In fact, the guidelines clearly state that the States are not required to address every section of all of the possible categories. Further, the charter school piece is only a small portion of the overall evaluation. In fact, New York already qualifies for several components of the charter school portion without having to eliminate the cap. We cannot continue to deprive our public schools of state revenue when so many charter schools have failed to improve education.

Until a more fair and sound funding mechanism for charter schools is established and until more evidence is available to prove that charter schools are producing the desired academic results, the state should not eliminate the cap that currently exists. In fact, now is the time to reform a system that takes much needed resources away from our public school system and that lacks accountability and transparency.

Finally, a more inclusive approval process, with input from school boards, parents and other local interests should be adopted prior to expansion of the charter school experiment. The true economic and academic impact of a proposed charter school should be made public and the Comptroller should have the same oversight of charter schools that currently exists for public schools.

On behalf of the 300,000 active and retired employees across New York State, CSEA opposes eliminating the charter school cap.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Turner
Director

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