

BOSTON LEADERS FOR EDUCATION



The Hon. Karen Spilka (D-2nd Middlesex & Norfolk)
The Hon. Jeffrey Sanchez (D-Boston)
The Hon. Joan Lovely (D-2nd Essex)
The Hon. Vinny DeMacedo (R-Plymouth and Barnstable)
The Hon. Stephen Kulik (D- Haydenville/First Franklin)
The Hon. Todd Smola (R-First Hampden)

Members of the Fiscal year 2019 House and Senate Conference Committee,

We are writing to express our strong opposition to an amendment adopted by the Senate to the Fiscal Year 2019 State Budget. This amendment would place a moratorium on the expansion of charter public schools unless the Legislature fully funds charter tuition reimbursement the state provides to districts. Amendment #205 was sponsored by Sen. Patricia Jehlen (D-Somerville).

We support the full funding of charter tuition reimbursement, and in all but a few recent years the Legislature has met that obligation. We cannot, however, support tying full funding to the future expansion of public charters. Doing so would provide charter opponents with a tool they could easily use to block charter growth in every corner of the state. The Legislature controls the appropriations process and can fully fund the tuition reimbursement line item at its own discretion

New charters should be approved and existing charters should expand as determined by the Commonwealth's long-standing process that is based on community need, parent demand and the strength of the application. This process is nationally recognized as holding public charters to high standards and has served the state and the children charters educate very well.

The Commonwealth is celebrating 25 years of educational advancement fostered by the 1993 Education Reform Act. We are proud of the fact that Massachusetts now ranks first in the nation in public education. We should also be proud of the fact that we have the best charter public schools in America. Charter schools have played a large role in moving Massachusetts to the head of the pack nationally, and they have proven to be a very effective model to close the persistent achievement and opportunity gaps that still exist in spite of 25 years of reform.

We respectfully ask that this amendment be struck in Conference Committee.



John Regan
Executive Vice President
Associated Industries of Massachusetts



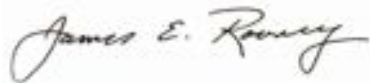
Paul Grogan
President & CEO
The Boston Foundation



JD Chesloff
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Massachusetts Business Roundtable



Mark Gallagher
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Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce



Chuck Longfield
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Linda Noonan
Executive Director
Massachusetts Business Alliance for
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Keri Rodrigues
Founding President
Massachusetts Parents United

cc: The Hon. Sonia Chang-Diaz (D-2nd Suffolk)
The Hon. Alice Peisch (D-14th Norfolk)