

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 123

Designating April 28, 2003, through May 2, 2003, as “National Charter Schools Week”, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 29, 2003

Mr. GREGG (for himself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. FRIST, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. BAYH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Designating April 28, 2003, through May 2, 2003, as “National Charter Schools Week”, and for other purposes.

Whereas charter schools are public schools authorized by a designated public body and operating on the principles of accountability, parental involvement, choice, and autonomy;

Whereas in exchange for the flexibility and autonomy given to charter schools, they are held accountable by their sponsors for improving student achievement and for their financial and other operations;

Whereas 39 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have passed laws authorizing charter schools;

Whereas 39 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will have received substantial assistance from the Federal Government by the end of the current fiscal year for planning, startup, and implementation of charter schools since their authorization in 1994 under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.);

Whereas 36 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are serving nearly 700,000 students in almost 2,700 charter schools during the 2002–2003 school year;

Whereas charter schools can be vehicles for improving student academic achievement for the students who attend them, for stimulating change and improvement in all public schools, and for benefiting all public school students;

Whereas charter schools must meet the same Federal student academic achievement accountability requirements as all public schools, and often set higher and additional goals, to ensure that they are of high quality and truly accountable to the public;

Whereas charter schools assess and evaluate students annually and often more frequently, and charter school student academic achievement is directly linked to charter school existence;

Whereas charter schools give parents new freedom to choose their public school, charter schools routinely measure parental approval, and charter schools must prove their ongoing and increasing success to parents, policymakers, and their communities;

Whereas more than two-thirds of charter schools report having a waiting list, the average size of such a waiting list is more than one-half of the school's enrollment, and the total number of students on all such waiting lists is enough to fill another 1,000 average-sized charter schools;

Whereas students in charter schools nationwide have similar demographic characteristics as students in all public schools;

Whereas charter schools in many States serve significant numbers of students from families with low incomes, minority students, and students with disabilities, and in a majority of charter schools almost half of the students are considered at risk or are former dropouts;

Whereas charter schools have enjoyed broad bipartisan support from the Administration, Congress, State Governors and legislatures, educators, and parents across the Nation; and

Whereas charter schools are laboratories of reform and serve as models of how to educate children as effectively as possible: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates April 28, 2003, through May 2,
3 2003, as “National Charter Schools Week”;

4 (2) honors the 11th anniversary of the opening
5 of the Nation's first charter school;

6 (3) acknowledges and commends the growing
7 charter school movement and charter schools, teach-
8 ers, parents, and students across the Nation for

1 their ongoing contributions to education and improv-
2 ing and strengthening the Nation's public school sys-
3 tem;

4 (4) supports the goals of National Charter
5 Schools Week, an event sponsored by charter schools
6 and charter school organizations across the Nation
7 and established to recognize the significant impacts,
8 achievements, and innovations of the Nation's char-
9 ter schools; and

10 (5) requests that the President issue a procla-
11 mation calling on the people of the United States to
12 conduct appropriate programs, ceremonies, and ac-
13 tivities to demonstrate support for charter schools in
14 communities throughout the Nation.

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