

# THE Center for Education Reform



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**For Immediate Release**

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## CALIFORNIA CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION PASSES

(5/1/98) California's charter law leaped to the head of the pack yesterday, with the surprising and timely approval of a new bill that dramatically eases the ability of applicants, and spurs quality charters to grow in the Golden State.

Fearing a popular ballot initiative, Senate and House leaders put their political differences aside and gave the leaders of the initiative an early win.

The expansion measure raises the number of schools that can be started to 250 in the 98-99 school year, and 100 every year thereafter; removes specific impediments from groups wanting to start charters; provides for more legal autonomy and fiscal equity for charter schools, and allows denials to be appealed to either the county or state boards of education. Among the differences between the legislation and the initiative are that under the legislation, charter teachers must be credentialed by the state, and the lowest performing schools do not have a clear right to charter, as they would have in the initiative.

The same teachers union that a few years ago tried to discourage every school teacher in the state from joining a charter staff with their "*Charter Schools Could Cost You Your Job*" Campaign apparently viewed the compromise bill as a containment strategy. Said a CTA spokesperson, "It's a better step than an initiative...With a constitutional initiative, it makes it very hard to amend..."

Using the Center for Education Reform's nationally-recognized Charter School rankings method, the newly expanded law would put California in nearly a dead heat with Michigan for second strongest charter law in the nation. For more information or a review of those rankings, check out our website at <http://edreform.com>. Details on the California victory can be found at the California Legislative Information website at <http://leginfo.ca.gov>.

The Center for Education Reform is a national, non-profit education reform advocacy group and an active broker in providing help, support and guidance to hundreds of communities and most of these United States.

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