

# THE Center for Education Reform



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**Fax Alert**

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**WASHINGTON STATE AND CHARTER SCHOOLS:  
"WHEN YOU LAY DOWN WITH DOGS, YOU WAKE UP WITH FLEAS"**

A handful of Washington State lawmakers can shoulder the blame for the defeat of a charter school bill on Monday, March 2. The bill, long in the making, reached a critical consensus point among most of the key players in the House and Senate, but myths and misconceptions won the day.

The lawmakers responsible are those Senators who voted in allegiance to the Washington Education Association; people like Senator Valoria Loveland, chair of the Democratic caucus, who said that "we could see no reason to approve a charter school bill when we weren't doing anything else for education." Said the state PTA, "We're very glad this went down. We've been opposed to use of public money for private schools, but we have to keep doing this every year." The union publicly endorsed the bill but reportedly worked behind the scenes to kill or gut the entire agreed-upon bill. The final negotiations rested on a modest bill with several restrictions, but not a bad effort overall. In the end, the few additional members who were needed for passage were swayed by the WEA on one side, and on the other, by some strange groups who convinced a few Republicans that the charter bill was the beginning of the New World Order!

For their tireless work and effort to bring charters to Washington State, commendations and kudos go to: Democratic Rep. Dave Quall; Republican Majority Whip Gigi Talcott, a public school teacher herself; Republican Senator and Floor leader Steve Johnson, and Democratic Governor Gary Locke, who signed on to the bipartisan effort and lobbied hard to gain his party's support on the final vote. May your efforts be not in vain, and may the outrageous unprincipled opposition of some in your state give way to an even stronger and vocal charter school alliance next year.

In the meantime, we provide some lessons for those who may be going through similar machinations or need to learn more about the education reform business:

When you hear the term "new unionism," disregard it.  
When the union tells you they publicly support the bill, laugh.  
When the PTA tells you they support public education, duck. And,  
When you lay down with dogs, you get up with fleas!

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[With the American public standing firm in its belief that education should be its number one priority, we wanted to call attention to this serious discussion and would encourage reporters to listen in to what is clearly becoming the pulse of the nation.]