

# THE Center for Education Reform



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## **PRESS RELEASE** **For Immediate Release**

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### STATEMENT BY CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM PRESIDENT JEANNE ALLEN REGARDING THE VIABILITY OF THE MARYLAND CHARTER SCHOOL BILL

(Washington, D.C. 3/25/03) As of today, both houses of the Maryland General Assembly have approved legislation that would give Maryland a charter school law, but unfortunately, would prevent any significant number of real quality choices in education being offered to children or to teachers seeking new opportunities.

The reason is very simple—of the eight laws in the nation that contain the kind of weak provisions that Maryland's proposed law contains, there have been only a handful of real autonomous charter schools created. Mostly school boards in these states have used these laws to convert traditional public schools to charter status so as to gain additional funding from the federal government. Boards in these states have also used the charter law to create alternative schools for children their own schools have trouble educating – a perversion of the reason charter schools should exist -- namely to provide better learning opportunities for ALL children in an environment of freedom and flexibility.

In Maryland, the vested interest groups that are working to preserve their control of public schools have won the day so far. The parents and teachers who have fought for four years in Maryland to provide better opportunities for children have been ignored.

Throughout the United States charter schools have raised student achievement. By requiring a focus on academic achievement and freedom from rules and regulations, thousands of charter schools have been created and are succeeding.

Scores of Maryland parents and teachers want a strong law that fosters numerous charter schools.

It is time for the Governor to stand up to the forces whose control have led to mediocre schools, and issue a strong veto message on any proposal that does not contain new authorities for authorizing charter schools and freedom for teachers to pursue their own employment conditions.

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*The Center for Education Reform is a national, independent, non-profit advocacy organization providing support and guidance to individuals, community and civic groups, policymakers and others who are working to bring fundamental reforms to their schools. For further information, please call (202) 822-9000 or visit our website at <http://edreform.com>.*