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October 14, 2003

Mr. Richard J. Steinke
Deputy State Superintendent
Office of Instruction and Academic Acceleration

Dear Mr. Steinke:

Thank you for your response to CER's comments on Maryland's draft charter policy. I'm sure this is just one of those issues on which reasonable people can disagree, and know that you're working hard to ensure that Maryland gets charter schools.

However, we continue to be dismayed by the abundance of regulatory detail and non-achievement related requirements that are part of most districts' charter policies. We've seen the results time and time again as to what happens when school boards are permitted to control the process. Initially there will be interest in starting charters and as these groups encounter the myriad of obstacles that will naturally result from these flawed policies, one by one they will fall away and be discouraged.

My associate, Anna Varghese, did provide detailed information, in person, and was witness to other advocates, such as Leslie Mansfield of the Monocacy Valley "charter" school, whose comments were ignored. Mounds of data were provided at various times to your offices and to those who were working on this issue with the Governor.

Be that as it may, I'd suggest it's time to move forward. We are committed to seeing that children gain access to sound educational opportunities in Maryland and will be working hard to do just that. We're appreciative of Commissioner Grasmick's role in this charter endeavor, as well as other reforms, and hope that as you go forward you'll view the Center's resources and depth of knowledge in charter schools as an asset.

Best Regards,

Jeanne Allen
President

cc: Karen Dates
Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick State
Anna Varghese