

THE Center for Education Reform



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FLORIDA SENATE IMPROVES OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

Washington, D.C., May 4, 2006 – The Florida Senate passed a bill today creating a new public authorizer for charter schools in the state, the Florida Schools of Excellence Commission. Modeled in part on the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board, the FSE will have the power to authorize charter schools independently or in partnership with universities, municipalities, and other entities it approves.

“This bill ensures that more and better quality charters schools will evolve to serve students in Florida,” said The Center for Education Reform president Jeanne Allen. “The new authorizer represents a ground breaking development in charter school policy and is modeled after some of the more successful laws in the country.”

Currently, local school boards are the only entity allowed to authorize charter schools in Florida. Senate Bill 1030, which is slightly different from the House version of the bill (HB135), passed by a 34-6 margin, but still needs Governor Jeb Bush’s signature before it can be enacted on July 1. In addition to this measure, the legislature also made some technical corrections to Florida’s charter school law.

“States with multiple sponsors have better, stronger and more accountable charter schools,” said Allen. “This is a major step forward for Florida education,”

Charter schools are innovative, public schools designed by educators, parents, or civic leaders that are open by choice, accountable for results, and free from most rules and regulations governing conventional public schools. Today, more than 3,600 charter schools serve more than a million children in forty states plus the District of Columbia.

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