

# THE Center for Education Reform



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**For Immediate Release**

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## **SOUTH CAROLINA AMENDMENT DRAWS PRAISE FROM CER** *Bill still has major shortcomings to be addressed in conference*

**Washington, DC (February 13, 2006)** - The Center for Education Reform (CER) today congratulated the South Carolina House of Representatives for amending the Charter Schools Bill (H3010) to protect existing charter schools from potentially harmful funding inequities. While the bill in its current form is an improvement, the Center restated its ongoing concerns that unless improved in conference committee, it will not achieve its real goal of fostering charter school growth.

“The changes made by the House validate concerns that CER has consistently expressed that the funding formulas in the bill are flawed and will lead to under-funding of new and existing charters in the state,” said CER president Jeanne Allen. “Unfortunately, our analysis finds that the new authorizer is governed by an inequitable funding formula and will not be able to provide critical support for new charters it will sponsor. However, we are hopeful legislators can address these problems in conference,” Allen noted.

Led by Representative Wallace Scarborough (R-Charleston), the House added provisions to the bill that will ensure local funding continues to follow children who already receive local funding in a state charter school if their school is not properly renewed by their local district sponsor. “Because under H3010 local funding will not follow students into the new statewide charter district created in the legislation, we have been concerned that the bill creates an economic incentive for local districts to offload their charter schools into the new district, by whatever means. Representative Scarborough’s amendment addresses this concern by mandating that local funding continue to follow students that move from local district sponsors to the new district if the charter renewal was wrongfully denied by the local district,” said Jeanne Allen, President of CER.



The amendment also adjusts the funding formula for existing charter schools so that their per-student funding is in closer parity to that of non-charter students in each school district. It mandates that charters be issued for five years so that charter schools can take advantage of a wider range of financing options. Finally, it clarifies ambiguities associated with the funding formula for charter schools in the new statewide charter school district created by the legislation.

The amendment was passed with overwhelming support, 84-25, by the full House after Representative Scarborough declared that its inclusion in the bill's final version is critical to his and his colleagues' support. Shortly thereafter, the amended bill was sent back the Senate, which is expected to send it to conference committee this week. "We appreciate the work of Representative Scarborough, which are largely consonant with those of CER. We also appreciate the work of the Governor's office to support these changes to the bill and look forward to working together to ensure that these changes remain in the bill that comes out of the conference committee," said Allen.

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*The Center for Education Reform (CER) creates opportunities for and challenges obstacles to better education for America's communities. Founded in 1993, CER combines education policy with grassroots advocacy to foster positive and bold education reforms. For more information, visit [www.edreform.com](http://www.edreform.com)*