

HOUSE No. 64

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
350 MAIN STREET
MALDEN, MASSACHUSETTS 02148, NOVEMBER 6, 1996.

The Honorable Robert E. MacQueen
Clerk of the House of Representatives
State House, Room 145
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Mr. MacQueen,

Pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 30 of the General Laws, I submit herewith a bill recommended by the Board of Education for legislative action during the 1997 session of the General Court. Accompanying the recommendation is the required explanation of the bill.

Sincerely,

ROBERT V. ANTONUCCI,
Commissioner of Education.

An Act Relative to Charter Schools

Proposal

This proposal seeks to raise current statutory limits on the number of charter schools in the Commonwealth and the number of students that may attend them, as well as to remove present limitations on the number of charter schools that may be located in any municipality.

Background

Massachusetts law (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 89, as amended by Chapter 151 of the Acts of 1996) establishes provisions for the establishment of alternative public schools, called charter schools, independent of local school districts. Current law limits the number of charter schools that operate in the Commonwealth to twenty-five. In addition, the law also limits the number of students that may attend charter schools to three-quarters of one percent of the total public school enrollment. The law also limits the number of charter schools that may operate in municipalities to five in Boston and Springfield and two in every other municipality.

Summary of Proposal

Section 1 of this bill would increase the number of charter schools that may operate in the Commonwealth from twenty-five to seventy-five. Section 2 would remove entirely the restrictions on the number of charter schools per municipality. Section 3 would increase the percentage of public school students that may attend charter schools from three-quarters of one percent to 10 percent.

Cost

Because the costs of these charter schools would be deducted from the state education aid to local and regional school districts, on a per pupil basis, for students enrolled in that district who choose to attend a charter school, the only additional costs the Commonwealth would incur would relate to the reimbursements to above-foundation school districts in which additional charter schools were established. As the number of these cannot be determined, the costs associated with such expenses cannot as yet be calculated.

Recommendation of the Department of Education (House, No. 64).
Education, Arts and Humanities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Seven.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO CHARTER SCHOOLS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 89 of Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts
2 General Laws, as appearing in the 1994 Official Edition, is hereby
3 amended by striking out, in the second sentence of the sixth para-
4 graph, the words: “twenty-five,” and inserting in place thereof the
5 following:— seventy-five.

1 SECTION 2. Said section 89 of said chapter 71 is hereby further
2 amended by striking out the third sentence of the sixth paragraph.

1 SECTION 3. Said section 89 of said chapter 71 is hereby fur-
2 ther amended by striking out, in the fourth sentence of the sixth
3 paragraph, the words: “three quarters of one,” and inserting in
4 place thereof the following:— ten.

