



TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION / NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
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The Texas State Teachers Association registers its opposition to Senate Bill 127 because it would remove the current limit on the number of open enrollment charter schools that the State Board of Education can grant, and it would allow for the expansion of charter campuses within an existing charter with absolutely no oversight or review process. Any expansion of the current charter system in Texas should be done only after a lengthy and exhaustive interim study focusing specifically at charter schools, how they are operating, what could be made better, and what might be a new appropriate cap for charter schools.

SB 127 would eliminate the 215 cap on the number of open enrollment charters currently in statute. It would allow SBOE to grant an additional ten charters each fiscal year. This number could be more, depending on the number of charter revocations or suspensions that open up existing spaces for new charters under the current system. The bill would also allow for an existing open enrollment charter holder to expand the number of campuses if 90 percent or more of the charter's campuses are assigned an acceptable performance rating.

The Texas Education Agency's ability to monitor an ever-increasing supply of charter schools would be problematic in light of the state's current fiscal crisis. The state needs to be able to maintain more control in this area, and TSTA is concerned that this is going to be impossible with anticipated cuts to the education budget. Allowing charters to expand at the will of the charter-holder is inviting abuse of the charter system. TEA historically has been constrained by a budget that has not allowed for proper oversight of charter schools, and TEA will be in even worse shape over the next biennium. This bill is similar to one introduced last session by Senator Patrick (SB 1830), which called for no cap and expansion if 75 percent of campuses were acceptable. The fiscal note attached to that bill last session had a probable net negative impact to general revenue related funds of \$4 million and almost half a billion to the Foundation School Fund for five years.

TSTA would be in favor of an interim study that looks specifically at charter schools, how they are operating, and what could be made better. Expanding charters while school districts are contemplating closing down public schools and possibly losing more than 100,000 public school employees is irresponsible. A bill with such a significant monetary obligation should not be entertained in light of the current financial crisis facing Texas lawmakers.