

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

{Insert Date}

Dear Governor Wolf,

On behalf of Avon Grove Charter School and the students we serve, I am writing to express my concerns with pieces of the charter school reform proposal you introduced recently.

First, I would like to voice my support for the pieces of your proposal that would strengthen accountability and transparency standards for charter schools. As recipients of taxpayer dollars, every public school should be held to the highest standards to ensure they are acting ethically and fiscally responsible. Secondly, I too believe that both charter schools and school districts would benefit from a uniform charter school application, as a way to create a level playing field. I also agree that the best way to examine the issues surrounding charter school funding would be best studied by a legislatively-created fair and balanced funding commission. I would ask that you refrain from implementing any of your executive actions until the General Assembly has studied these issues and made recommendations.

Though there are a few parts of your proposal that I support, there are several initiatives that would be detrimental to charter school operations, limit our ability to educate students and strip parents of their right to choose the best educational environment for their child. The first issue, which would financially harm every charter school in the Commonwealth, is your plan to have the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) initiate a "fee-for-service" for the work they do to implement the Charter School Law. The job of PDE is to ensure PA's Public School Code is implemented and support public schools in their efforts to educate students. To require charter schools to pay for PDE to review cyber charter applications/renewals, process payments (which are only necessary because districts refuse to pay tuition to charter schools) and technical support will divert valuable funding from services and programs dedicated to improving student outcomes.

I am concerned with your plan to cap charter school enrollment in both brick-and-mortar and cyber charter schools and place a moratorium on the establishment of new cyber charter schools. The fact is that families want educational choices and, for many low-income students (who can't afford a private education), charter schools are the only educational choice available. No elected official or government bureaucrat should have the right to tell a parent how or where to educate his or her child.

Finally, please ensure that your proposal addresses change for all schools with in Pennsylvania, If you are going to pursue initiatives to improve public education for the students of the Commonwealth those initiatives should apply to ALL public schools. You stressed the importance of equity in your remarks and in your reason for drafting this proposal and I agree that equity is certainly lacking in the Charter School Law - - but it is the districts who disproportionately benefit from the current system.

On behalf of Avon Grove Charter School and the students we serve, I ask that you work collaboratively with the General Assembly and the Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (PCPCS), which represent our school in Harrisburg, to address the important issues facing charter schools. I truly believe that we all share the same goal...educating PA students in the most effective and financially responsible way. It is my hope that we can all work together to ensure PA's school districts and charter schools are high-quality options for students.

I would also like to take this opportunity to invite you to visit Avon Grove Charter School at any time. I am positive that you will find our school to be a productive environment for our students, a fantastic place to work for our staff and a proud representation of high-quality public schools in PA. If you would like to set up a school visit or would like to discuss the issues addressed in this letter, please feel free to contact me at [INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER}

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

cc. Speaker Mike Turzai
Rep. Bryan Cutler, House Majority Leader
Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati
Sen. Jake Corman, Senate Majority Leader
Sen. Wayne Langerholc, Senate Education Committee Chair
Sen. Andrew Dinniman, Senate Education Committee Minority Chair
Rep. Curt Sonney, House Education Committee Chair
Rep. Jim Roebuck, House Education Committee Minority Chair
Sen. Pat Browne
Rep. Mike Reese
Rep. Jesse Topper