

# THE Center for Education Reform



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## **LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN GEORGIA TO CREATE MORE, HIGHER QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS**

**Washington, D.C., April 26, 2007** – In the waning moments of this year’s legislative session, a bill to create an independent commission that would authorize charter schools was introduced. The bill (HB 881) establishes an independent, state-level commission whose primary focus is the development and support of charter schools in order to better meet the growing and diverse needs of parents in the state of Georgia.

Charter schools currently exist in Georgia but may only be approved by the local school board.

“This legislation will go a long way to create quality charter schools and increase the number of schools available for the children of Georgia” said Jeanne Allen, president of The Center for Education Reform.

Georgia’s charter schools have already had remarkable success, making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) at dramatically higher rates than conventional public schools for three consecutive years. Georgia charter school students also have a graduation rate of 83.6 percent, more than 14 percent higher than all public schools.

However, their growth has been severely limited by school boards that already have an overwhelming workload, dealing with the needs and requirements of educating 1.5 million kids statewide. The new proposal would alleviate the full burden of chartering that currently rests only with school boards.

The bill would:

- Require strong levels of accountability and standards for charters authorized under the new commission.
- Create a balance between necessary oversight and overregulation to ensure the maximum amount of charter school autonomy consistent with the intent of the charter school concept.

Currently 31 other states have entities other than school boards that may approve and manage charter schools. States with multiple chartering authorities have 4.5 times more charter schools than states requiring local school board approval only. Local boards, however, are more likely to grant charters when state laws permit multiple authorizers. Ninety-six percent of the nation's charter schools are in states with multiple authorizers or a strong appeals process. These states are home to the highest quality charter schools.

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