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March 11, 2021

Contact:

Cristie Strake
(512) 463-0107
Cristie.Strake@senate.texas.gov

Brian Whitley
(510) 495-5542
bwhitley@txcharterschools.org

Senator Bettencourt Files SB 28 in the Texas Senate to Create Educational Opportunities for Texas Families

Public Education Chair Harold Dutton filed identical companion, HB 3279 in Texas House

The Charter School Equity Act will help more Texas students access public schools that meet their needs

AUSTIN – Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) and Chairman Harold Dutton (D-Houston) file The Charter School Equity Act, which levels the playing field for successful public charter schools that are prepared to meet the needs of more Texas families. This bipartisan legislation has 11 joint-authors in the Texas Senate including Senators Birdwell, Buckingham, Campbell, Creighton, Hall, Hughes, Lucio, Paxton, Perry, Springer, and Taylor. Representative Harold Dutton (D-Houston) filed the companion bill, HB 3279, in the House.

“Parents deserve to be in the driver’s seat when it comes to the education of their children,” said **Senator Bettencourt**. “This legislation ensures that public charter schools, which have a remarkably successful track record, can continue to give families access to schools that work for them.” he added.

“Public charter schools are meeting the needs of families across Texas,” said **Representative Harold Dutton**. “I’m pleased to work with Senator Bettencourt and my colleagues in the House on this important legislation that will give more students the opportunity to thrive.”

SB 28 puts parents and students first by preventing local governments from forcing charter schools to follow different rules than ISDs regarding zoning, permitting, and construction. This excessive red tape forces schools to spend taxpayer funding on lawyers and consultants instead of on classroom priorities.

The bill also revises the role of the State Board of Education (SBOE) in approving new public charter schools. Currently, the SBOE can veto high-quality proposals to open new charters in communities where there is demonstrated need and parent demand. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) already vets prospective charter schools intensively -- including soliciting the feedback of independent experts -- and holds applicants to high standards for academic and financial readiness.

[Research shows](#) that Texas public charter schools are rapidly closing achievement gaps and preparing more students -- particularly low-income students of color -- for success in college, career, and life.

Support for The Charter School Equity Act:

“The Charter School Equality Act dismantles the barriers that prevent some of our state’s highest-performing, most popular public schools from serving the students who need them most. I applaud Senator Bettencourt for his leadership and his strong support for the needs of Texas families.” -- **Starlee Coleman, CEO, Texas Public Charter Schools Association**

“I’m thrilled to work with Senator Bettencourt and other elected officials who are helping public charter schools fulfill their commitment to communities like mine in Dallas. We should be spending our time and taxpayer funding on serving students, not navigating a maze of red tape.” -- **Randy Shaffer, CEO and Superintendent, Trinity Basin Preparatory**

“Uplift Education and other high-performing charter schools are regularly hampered from making an impact in a geographical area because of municipal rules. As we have planned for new schools in under-resourced areas, it is sometimes difficult to plan for opening timelines due to the current city special use permit requirement (SUP) for charter schools. Additionally, as a high-performing public charter school we also have to renew our SUP every 5-10 years which can be disruptive to the important focused work of educating students. These issues are addressed with the filing and hopeful passage of SB 28. I look forward to working with Senator Bettencourt, who continues to be a CHAMPION for public students, teachers, and families.” --**Yasmin Bhatia, CEO, Uplift Education**

“There should be more support and assistance to public charter schools for families who want to give their children a high-quality education, but cannot get that opportunity because there is no space. My son with a disability wants to study business. That is his dream. He is challenged, but also very supported. His public charter school gives him the attention and care he needs to make his dreams a reality.” -- **Dolores Amaro, mother of five children in Houston, including one charter school graduate and two current charter students**

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