

BPS PARENTS CALL ON MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATURE TO “KEEP THE CAP”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), a group of Boston Public School parents with children in over 30 of the city’s schools, called today for the Massachusetts House of Representatives to maintain the current legal limit on the growth of charter schools in the Commonwealth. In a message to its supporters, QUEST insisted, “Until funding inequities between district schools and charters are systematically addressed, until charters prove their ability and willingness to educate all children, until real accountability for charters is in place, the charter cap must not be lifted.”

According to State House sources, House Speaker Robert DeLeo has “teed up” the bill to loosen the charter cap for a House vote on Wednesday of this week. Citing “unstable and inequitable funding of traditional public schools” and “the continued lack of accountability measures to ensure that charters justly and equitably serve all children,” QUEST is asking House members to defeat the current bill, which emerged only when the original legislation to loosen the cap could not clear the Joint Education Committee.

QUEST supports a move by the House to fully fund the legally-mandated reimbursement of school districts for funds lost to charter tuition payments, but sees no connection between this legal responsibility and the charter cap. QUEST member, Heshan Berents-Weeramuni asks, “What do the Legislature’s legal responsibility to reimburse schools for lost tuition and the lifting of the charter cap have to do with each other? To connect the two is a shabby maneuver designed to gain political support for a bad policy.”

Expressing concern about a shared lottery between charter and district schools, one provision of the legislation, Megan Wolf, another QUEST member says, "The bill includes an untested 'opt out' lottery mandate. Here in Boston, where we have a new assignment system, we just don't know what effects it would have, particularly on equity and access to quality schools."