



A coalition of education and civil rights organizations released the following statement in response to the draft platform recommendation from the Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force:

While there is much to applaud in the Task Force’s recommendations for public education, suggestions related to charter schools were harmful, disappointing and misleading.

To begin, charter schools were curiously absent from the list of “multiple public school pathways to access the opportunities students deserve.” Charter schools – which are always public schools, never charge tuition and do not have selective admission processes – were omitted from a list that included career and technical education, magnet schools for science and the arts, International Baccalaureate programs, and early college high schools. Charter schools are an important component of a vibrant public education ecosystem. It is especially egregious to omit charter schools from this list when polling consistently shows Black and Latino parents and voters strongly support charter schools.

Charter schools serve 3.3 million students in America, and there are five million more who would attend a charter school if space were available. These unique, innovative public schools disproportionately serve Black and Latino students, and students from low-income families. And they do it very well. Data has consistently shown charter schools actually do a better job than their district school counterparts at educating students who have traditionally been poorly served in schools operated by school districts. It is therefore puzzling that policy that proposes to represent the Democratic Party would suggest denying resources in the very schools that deliver exceptional outcomes for black and brown students and those from low-income families.

The recommendation that federal funding for charter schools be contingent upon approval by a school district is absurd. The potential for conflict of interest abounds. Many school districts

view charter schools as their competitors and they simply don't want them to operate. Further, the very notion that the charter school should have to prove to a district that it would not "systemically underserve the neediest students" belies the inconvenient truth that many districts have been systematically underserving these students for generations. There are many in school districts who would rather deny charter schools funding than ensure all children are well educated.

In addition, as suggested in the recommendations, increased federal regulation of charter schools would override local control by charter school authorizers, even though states already hold charter schools accountable to higher standards of transparency than district schools.

These tactics are to be expected of charter school opponents who will stop at nothing to maintain the status quo. But Mr. Biden knows better. We strongly urge him to reconsider these recommendations that are harmful to charter schools.

Brightbeam
Democrats for Education Reform
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
EdAllies
Memphis Lift
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
National Charter Collaborative
National Parents Union
NewSchools Venture Fund
Progressive Policy Institute