

Celebrating Chartering for

30 Years

MINNESOTA'S STORY

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## Celebrating Chartering @ 30 – MINNESOTA'S STORY

During the Senate debate of the omnibus education bill, **Senator Reichgott** used the occasion to speak publicly about chartering and address the opponents of chartering.

*"It has been most unfortunate that the opponents to this proposal, modified as it is, have flooded the legislature with misinformation about this proposal. They claim that this would jeopardize the seniority rights and salaries and benefits of teachers. They neglect to tell you that charter schools are voluntary and only those teachers who wish to participate will do so.*

*Opponents fear that charter schools will not operate under the same rules and regulations as other public schools. My response is, amen. Aren't we all trying to remove state mandates from education and other areas? How many teachers have you known who have burned out over many years because they fought the system and lost? Frustrated teachers are leaving the profession because they can't express themselves and teach as they would like, because there is too much bureaucracy and too much resistance. In the end, both teachers and students lose.*

*Opponents say this would subtract dollars from public school district general funds. That will happen no more than any other choice program that we've established so far. If a student leaves a school for a better opportunity, isn't this a healthy reallocation of our state dollars?*

*Opponents state that unlicensed personnel will be allowed to teach. This is absolutely false, as the bill clearly states. I changed the legislation to accommodate the concerns in this area raised by teachers. Yet, even after the legislation was changed, legislators were told differently.*

*And finally, perhaps the biggest issue of all: Chartered schools are a new kind of public school. They are not private schools. No tuition can be charged. All learners who apply must be considered on a first-come, first-serve basis, or by lot. The bill clearly prohibits the use of dollars for any sectarian or religious schools. Yet the opponents tell you otherwise.*

*Members of the senate, you deserve better than this. Members, we've heard these fears before. They are the same horror stories we heard when this legislature passed open enrollment and*

*postsecondary options. Today we point with pride to the success of these programs and the students who have achieved in them. I expect no less of the charter school proposal.*

*Please vote to make chartered schools a reality."*

Even though chartering passed, there were different thoughts about what had passed. Senator Reichgott and other proponents who had worked on the issue for 3 years were deeply disappointed by the final charter provisions. House members, on the other hand who had thought there was "zero change of passage" were ecstatic. In her 2011 interview for the book **Zero Change of Passage**, Rep. Kelso, the House author stated: "I thought it was spectacular.... I thought the fact that it went through was unbelievable.... The chances were slim. It's miracle that it passed."

On June 4, 1991 – Governor Arne Carlson, who had not expressed support for chartering signed the Omnibus Education Bill into law.

**NEXT WEEK:** What happens next.

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Quotes are from the book: **ZERO CHANCE OF PASSAGE**, by Senator Ember Reichgott Junge. Limited copies of the book are still available. To order a copy email: [ember.reichgott@gmail.com](mailto:ember.reichgott@gmail.com)



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