



April 24, 2025

Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi
1021 O Street, Suite 5310
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: ASSEMBLY BILL 84 - STRONGLY OPPOSE

Dear Assemblymember Muratsuchi:

On behalf of the California Policy Center, a nonprofit dedicated to removing unnecessary governmental barriers to freedom and a longtime advocate for parental rights and school choice, I write in strong opposition to AB 84.

Our network of thousands of California families — many of whom rely on charter schools for a high-quality, flexible education — is alarmed by this latest attempt to hamstring one of the few consistently responsive sectors in public education. The bill's euphemistic promise of “accountability” belies what it actually does: make it harder for charter schools to survive, much less thrive, under an ever-growing stack of regulatory burdens that somehow never seem to apply to the state's underperforming traditional public schools.

Charter schools are already subject to rigorous oversight, required to prove their academic value and financial solvency or face non-renewal and closure — outcomes nearly unheard of in traditional districts, regardless of how poorly they perform. The idea that charters need more scrutiny while California's 944 school districts escape equivalent treatment is, at best, a curious oversight. At worst, it's a policy of selective enforcement — one that rewards failure and punishes innovation.

In fact, charter schools have been a lifeline to millions of students over the past three decades — particularly students of color and those from low-income families — who were subtly or systematically failed by their neighborhood schools. Unlike many traditional schools, charters can't coast on inertia. They must earn the trust of parents year after year. That's real accountability.

We encourage you to consider the broader context: according to the most recent NAEP scores, just 28% of California eighth graders are proficient in math, and only 30% in reading. The Smarter Balanced Assessment results are equally bleak: fewer than half of California students met grade-level standards in English, and only 34% did so in math. These results are not anomalies — they are trends.

Meanwhile, families are voting with their feet. Public school enrollment is declining, especially in large urban districts, while charter schools continue to see interest and waitlists. AB 84 would effectively shut the door on those seeking better options — a blow to students, not special interests. And let's be honest: this bill may read like a dry procedural tune-up, but it's tuned to the frequency of special interests who desire to eliminate their competition.

Had AB 84 applied its mandates equally to all public schools, it might merit a serious policy debate. But by singling out charter schools, it makes clear this is less about student achievement and more about preserving a power structure increasingly out of step with California families.

Rather than pursue legislation that stifles educational alternatives, we urge you to turn your attention to the 10,000 traditional schools in this state, many of which — despite generous funding increases — still fail to meet even the most basic academic benchmarks. Let parents choose the learning environment that works for their children. Isn't that the kind of accountability that really matters?

For these reasons, we respectfully but firmly oppose AB 84.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lance Christensen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lance" being more prominent than the last name "Christensen".

Lance Christensen
Vice President of Education Policy & Government Affairs