



CALIFORNIA POLICY CENTER

June 27, 2025

Sen. Sasha Renée Pérez
Chair, Senate Education Committee
1021 O Street, Room 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: ASSEMBLY BILL 84 - STRONGLY OPPOSE

Dear Chair Pérez:

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.

This bill, while framed as a technical measure to enhance charter school “accountability,” in reality, creates a complex new layer of regulation that threatens the viability of hundreds of charter schools across California. Our network of thousands of California families, many of whom rely on charter schools for a flexible and high-quality education, sees AB 84 for what it is: a solution in search of a problem, premised on the misrepresentation that current law is inadequate to address fraud or misconduct.

The truth is that California charter schools are already subject to rigorous oversight and must regularly prove both academic value and financial solvency or risk closure. That’s a level of accountability rarely applied to traditional school districts, regardless of performance. The notion that charters require more scrutiny while California’s 944 school districts avoid equivalent standards is, at best, misplaced and, at worst, deliberate.

We are also troubled by the rushed and opaque amendment process surrounding this bill. Changes have been made in rapid succession, behind closed doors, and without transparent deliberation. This raises questions about whose interests are being served. It appears less an effort to strengthen educational outcomes than to reinforce the status quo, one that too often fails students and families.

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 have not been well-

served by their assigned neighborhood schools. Unlike traditional schools, charters must earn parents' trust every year. They can't rely on bureaucratic inertia. That is real, measurable accountability.

Meanwhile, the broader context of California's educational performance is sobering. According to the most recent NAEP results, only 28% of eighth graders are proficient in math, and 30% in reading. On the Smarter Balanced tests, fewer than half of students met grade-level standards in English, and just 34% in math. These are not outliers; they reflect long-standing trends.

Families are taking note and voting with their feet. Enrollment in traditional public schools continues to decline, especially in large urban districts, while demand for charter schools remains strong and growing. AB 84 would make it even harder to expand or sustain alternatives denying families access to options that better fit their children's needs. A bill that claims to promote fairness instead narrows opportunity and punishes innovation.

Had AB 84 applied its mandates uniformly across all public schools, it might warrant serious policy discussion. But by singling out charter schools for more scrutiny, it becomes clear: this is not about student achievement. It's about limiting competition.

Rather than pursue legislation that restricts choice, we urge you to focus on the thousands of traditional schools across California that, despite record funding, continue to struggle with the basics. Let parents choose the educational environments that work for their children. That's the accountability that truly 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 a long, sweeping underline.

Lance Christensen
Vice President of Education Policy & Government Affairs