June 26, 2026

Senator John Laird
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
1020 N Street, Room 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: ASSEMBLY BILL 126 (Budget Committee) – LETTER OF OPPOSITION

Dear Chair Laird:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations committed to public education access, transparency, and innovation, we write concerning the education trailer bill before you in AB 126, which could have costly fiscal implications for charter schools, specifically for the nonclassroom-based (NCB) variety which serve tens of thousands of students across California.

As you may remember, the legislature considered several bills to address charter school regulation last year, most notably in AB 84 (Muratsuchi) and SB 414 (Ashby). AB 84 stalled because your chamber determined the bill was an overreach and Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoed SB 414 noting that "While the oversight and auditing provisions are meaningful, other sections are unworkable, would face legal challenges, and require hundreds of millions of dollars to implement." However, we see some of the same concerns among the most recently amended version beyond the oversight functions most NCB charters can live with.

We share the legislature's commitment to accountability, transparency, student safety, and the responsible oversight of public funds. Several provisions in this proposal, however, closely track language from AB 84 and SB 414 that our community opposed. As written, the new Education Code Section 51827 would reduce educational opportunities, limit family flexibility, and create barriers for the small, community-based providers that serve charter students — without delivering meaningful gains in accountability or safety. Many of these requirements single out nonclassroom-based charter schools while leaving other public school models untouched.

We respectfully request the following amendments to Section 51827:

Subdivision (a)(4) — Contract itemization for nonclassroom-based charters only. NCBs and other charters work with small providers through purchase orders and invoices rather than formal contracts. If this is a concern to the legislature, this itemization requirement should apply equally to all public schools.

Subdivision (a)(6) — Ban on memberships and season passes. Educational memberships are frequently used in teacher-directed programs and are often more cost-effective than repeated single-day admissions. We ask that you allow memberships and passes used as part of a teacher-led program when they are educationally beneficial and fiscally reasonable.

Subdivision (a)(7) — Business license requirement. Many legitimate providers operate in jurisdictions that do not require a business license. We ask that you clarify that a license is required only where the city, county, or other local jurisdiction requires one.

Subdivision (a)(9) — Ban on parent reimbursement. Some educational opportunities are available only through reimbursement when a vendor cannot use the purchase-order process. We ask that you strike this provision, or allow reimbursement for materials and services that align with a student's learning plan and are supported by receipts.

Subdivision (a)(10) — Contractor safety and emergency plans. This imposes school-style safety, emergency-response, and accident-reporting requirements on small providers who already operate legally and whose students are often supervised by a parent who is present. We ask that you strike this provision, or narrow it to compliance with applicable health, safety, and business laws while recognizing supervision by a parent, guardian, or school employee.

Subdivision (a)(11) and Education Code Section 45125.1 — Background checks. The amendment to Section 45125.1 removes a longstanding exception for activities conducted under the direct supervision of a parent, guardian, or school employee. We ask that you restore that supervision exception.

Subdivision (a)(12) — Qualification and expertise standard. This creates a new, undefined standard that could exclude valuable providers whose strengths lie in professional, industry, artistic, cultural, or lived experience rather than formal credentials. We ask that you strike this provision, or clarify that qualifications may be shown through experience, portfolios, training, certifications, or other relevant evidence.

Subdivision (a)(13) — Prohibition on charging families. Charter school funding often does not cover the full cost of a class or program, and families frequently choose to pay the difference with their own private funds. This provision reaches beyond the oversight of public funds and into private transactions between families and providers. We ask that you strike it, or clarify that it applies only to services funded by the school and does not restrict voluntary private agreements for additional services.

We support strong oversight of public funds. We ask only that this oversight be for all public schools across the board and not come at the expense of the educational opportunities and family choices that nonclassroom-based charter schools were created to provide. This language should not be rushed and we ask for the summer recess to work with the legislature and governor's office on language that protects all our goals.

Respectfully,

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California Policy Center

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Stand Up Ministry, Calvary Chapel Solano

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