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Mr. Don Parkinson
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Workforce
1000 Airport Rd. Second Floor
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Secretary Parkinson

The members of the League of Women Voters of Kentucky are very concerned about the passage of charter schools legislation in Kentucky because of the threat it might represent to public schools. Equal access to quality education is essential for preparing Kentucky students for their futures. Because of our concern for the education of all students, we believe the principles of the Annenberg Rules should serve as the primary guide for assessing the implementation of charter schools in Kentucky.

The Annenberg document "Public Accountability for Charter Schools Standards and Public Policy Recommendations for Effective Oversight" (2013) details the following:

1. Traditional districts and charter schools should work together to ensure a coordinated approach that serves all children.
2. School governance should be representative and transparent.
3. Charter schools should ensure equal access to interested students and prohibit practices that discourage enrollment or disproportionately push enrolled students out of the school.
4. Charter school discipline policy should be fair and transparent.
5. All students deserve equitable and adequate school facilities. Districts and charter schools should work together to ensure that facilities arrangements do not disadvantage students in either sector.
6. Online charter schools should be regulated for quality transparency and the protection of student and the protection of student data. NB: Kentucky has not legislated the possibility of online charter schools.
7. Monitoring and oversight of charter schools are critical to protect the public interest. Charter schools should be fully funded.

While the above standards seem reasonable and mesh with the Kentucky legislation, the League sees the need to move forward judiciously. As noted in the report, "...uneven academic performance; practices that pushed or kept students out of charter schools, overly harsh discipline policies; funding patterns that destabilized traditional schools; and lack of representative governance, transparency, and oversight have led to potential conflicts of interest and instances of fraud and other problems, "Caution is urged as Kentucky proceeds.

The League requests that you review the Annenberg Rules document for additional recommendations concerning local level implementation as well as identification of potential pitfalls to be avoided. See <http://www.annenberginstitute.org/sites/default/files/CharterAccountabilityStds.pdf>

Your attention to this information is appreciated.

Bonnie Lynch,

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