



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

Senate Democrats Reject Republican Amendment to Expand School Choice by Lifting Arbitrary Charter School Cap

GEORGE M. BORRELLO May 11, 2022

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Albany, NY – Senate Democrats today unanimously rejected a Senate Republican Conference amendment that would have expanded school choice and the number of high-quality charter schools by lifting the restrictive charter school cap that is preventing tens of thousands of economically disadvantaged students from attending their preferred schools.

Senator George Borrello advanced the amendment during a debate on legislation establishing an office of racial equity and social justice, arguing that there is no better path to those goals than by providing high-quality education alternatives to families in traditionally marginalized communities.

“The best gift you can provide a child is education, and every parent in New York should have the opportunity to choose the best education for their children. Today, I proudly supported Senator George

Borrello’s amendment that would lift the state cap on charter schools, which would have ensured every family has a choice and access to high quality educational opportunities no matter where they live. Unfortunately, this common-sense policy was voted down by every one of my colleagues in the Majority,” **said Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt.**

“It is disappointing that despite Democrats’ continual rhetoric about prioritizing equity and opportunity, when presented with a chance to truly move the needle on those issues, they declined. While all families want the very best for their children, those without the financial resources to afford private schools must rely on the public schools. If those public schools are underperforming or cannot provide the individualized instruction that some students require, charter schools should be an available option,” **said Senator Borrello.**

Under New York State law, a total of 460 charter schools can exist in the state with a separate cap set for New York City. Currently, there are no more charters available to be issued in the City, where demand for access to charter schools is overwhelming. In the 2019-20 school year, roughly [81,000 applications](#) were submitted for approximately 33,000 available seats in New York City charter schools.

Senator Borrello noted data confirming the effectiveness of charter schools is prevalent, with 88 percent of students attending New York City’s charter schools outperforming their peers in the English language arts state exam and 91 percent outperforming on the math exam. He added that this success is particularly important in light of the fact that 80 percent of SUNY authorized charter school students are economically disadvantaged.

“Charter schools have proven their value, as evidenced by data showing that most outperform their districts in math, reading and writing and often have higher graduation rates. However, availability is so scarce that tens of thousands of student applicants are regularly turned away, leaving them not only disappointed, but less likely to reach their full educational potential,” said Borrello.

“Every child should have the opportunity to attend the school of their choice. Unfortunately, powerful special interests are more concerned with their own agendas and have been able to kill every effort to remove or raise the charter school cap. They are undermining the futures of countless children, which is unconscionable.”

As of the 2020-2021 school year, approximately 183,000 children attended a charter school in New York State, with approximately 82 percent of those in New York City. The last time the cap was raised was in 2015.

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