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**House of Representatives**  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg

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**MEMO**

To: All House Members  
From: Representative Tom Killion   
Date: May 3, 2012  
Subject: Legislation - Charter School Reform

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In the near future, I will be introducing legislation to substantially reform the current charter school law. This new legislation will build upon the previously introduced proposals.

Over the past several months, the House Education Committee has held several informational meetings on the topic of charter school reform and during these hearings the Education Committee heard from both proponents and opponents of charter schools; including parents, students, teachers, school administrators, and various interested organizations. The information gathered during these meetings, and discussions with interested parties since then, has led to a comprehensive charter school reform bill. Several major key reforms are highlighted below.

- Creates an independent administrative commission, separate from the PA Department of Education (PDE), which shall provide oversight of charter schools and cyber charter schools.
- Creates a statewide advisory committee to explore charter school entity funding issues and make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor.
- Allows a local board of school directors and the commission (in the 10% lowest performing school districts) to become an authorizer to be eligible to authorize a charter school. The commission shall be the only authorizer of cyber charter schools.
- Standardizes and streamlines the charter school entity application and renewal process.

- Prohibits payments being made to gain signatures during the petition for converting a district-run school to a charter school.
- Authorizes the creation of a performance matrix to be used by school boards and the commission to evaluate charter school entities.
- Streamlines process by which charter school entities are paid, by allowing for direct payment from PDE.
- Standardizes reporting requirements and requires better disclosure of information from charter school entities and their non-profit charter school foundations.
- Requires annual independent audits of charter school entities and public disclosure.
- Specifies that the Ethics Act applies to all charter school and cyber charter school board trustees and employees; prohibits conflicts of interest; and requires annual ethics filings.
- Allows for local boards of school directors to convert an existing district-run school into a charter school entity.
- Allows for the merger and creation of Multiple Charter School Organizations.
- Prohibits Boards of Trustees members from receiving compensation for their duties on the board.
- Allows for charter school entities to seek accreditation.
- Enables charter school entities to use sectarian facilities under certain circumstances.
- Establishes an Unreserved Fund Balance Limit on charter school entities to the same funding percentages as school districts.

I believe that these updates to the charter school law provide for a commonsense, well-balanced, and timely reform bill. While taking into account the needs of students, parents, taxpayers, school districts and charter schools, this bill will ensure that all children in this Commonwealth have the opportunity for a quality education while allowing taxpayers to be confident that public dollars for education are responsibly spent.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please contact Alison Hagler in my Harrisburg office at [ahagler@pahousegop.com](mailto:ahagler@pahousegop.com) or (717)772-0855.

Thank you.