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the
CENTER FOR EDUCATION

Alison Consoletti: Maine Is Not the Number One Charter Law

WASHINGTON, DC -- Alison Consoletti, vice president of research at The Center for Education Reform, released the following statement expressing concern over the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools ranking of Maine as the number one charter school law in the country:

Maine is not number one and its charter law should not be seen as a model for other states.

Last year we commended Maine lawmakers for successfully enacting – after 10 years of effort by parents and citizens – a charter law, albeit limited, that would provide much needed opportunities for students. And while CER counseled those involved to enact a better, stronger law, several compromises were made in order to secure passage, such as allowing the state to authorize only 10 schools over the next 10 years.

The law enacted is a modest attempt at creating new, public schools that are opened by choice, held accountable for results and free to innovate. Maine's law has many limitations that jeopardize its effectiveness if not improved.

From the results, it's clear that NAPCS methodology fails to account for the need to operate with flexibility and autonomy or for the necessity to have strong, multiple authorizers in place to ensure success.

This is based on 15 years of researching the most successful charter school laws in the country, analyzing the impact of each provision and clause in the laws and regulations, and looking at the final impact on the actual creation of schools. According to CER's analysis, the District of Columbia's charter law ranks number one. Maine will likely be ranked in the middle of the pack nationally and receive a grade in the C range.

Only when these crippling limitations are removed from Maine's law would it have an actual shot at being ranked first.

CER, since 1993, is the leading voice and advocate for lasting, substantive and structural education reform in the U.S. Additional information about the Center and its activities can be found at www.edreform.com.

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