



February 27, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

As a long-time and deeply involved public education parent group in Chicago and throughout Illinois we are writing in support of public school parents and students in Puerto Rico and against the expansion of charter schools. **We oppose Senate Bill 824 and House Bill 1441 which would enable charter expansion in Puerto Rico.**

We have many years of experience with charter schools in Chicago and we oppose the expansion of charter schools. Instead we support the full resourcing of existing public schools.

**We believe that parents and students in Puerto Rico know that what is needed is strong public school funding for well resourced, community centered schools that serve the needs of all students.**

We have looked behind the rhetoric of charter schools and “choice” coming from Chicago's political leaders and corporate donors and have found that:

1. CHARTERS DO NOT PROVIDE CHOICE AND LOCAL CONTROL. The charters that exist in Chicago do not have elected local school councils where parent and community members have a voice. They are managed by boards of directors of private groups with little input from other stakeholders. Parent involvement is minimal compared to traditional public schools. And while charters claim to accept all students there are many barriers to enrollment and there are push-out practices once enrolled; this results in what some organizations call “the illusion of school choice”.

2. CHARTER SCHOOLS RESULT IN THE DIVERSION OF MONEY AWAY FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS. In states and districts with already inadequate funds for public education, charters take money which would otherwise go to existing publicly run public schools.

**We encourage legislators in Puerto Rico to oppose Senate Bill 824 and House Bill 1441 and instead to work for full funding for regular public schools.**

Sincerely,  
Joy Clendenning

Joy Clendenning, Managing Director