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MEMBER
Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force

February 10, 2006

Catherine Collins
Board of Education
Room 801 City Hall
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Dr. Collins:

I am in receipt of the report of the Charter School Moratorium Task Force that you mailed to me on February 3, 2006. I am disappointed that you and a majority of your colleagues have voted to impose a two year moratorium on new charter schools in the City of Buffalo.

Notwithstanding the "financial impact" that charters are having on the District's budget, parents and children are voting with their feet. Inner city parents are making a very clear statement: They are dissatisfied with the quality of education their children are receiving in the traditional district schools and are unwilling to wait for the problems to be fixed. By imposing this moratorium, you are denying thousands of, more often than not impoverished, inner city families the opportunity that their more affluent city counterparts enjoy, that opportunity is CHOICE!

I am sensitive to the concerns expressed by the school district regarding the budgetary impacts, which is why I have introduced bill A4510 which would provide reimbursement to the traditional public school district in which a new charter school is established or an existing charter school is significantly expanded.

Currently great inequity exists wherein the affluent (largely white) urban community have a choice of what school to send their children to while the more impoverished (largely African American and Latino) inner city residents do not. As we mourn the loss of a great civil rights leader, Coretta Scott King, I am amazed that this great inequity is allowed to continue. To me, the denial of a quality education to any child or group of children is the most egregious form of discrimination.

As I often say, I do not believe there is an individual in Western New York who fights harder for our public schools than I do. One could argue that we do not need charters; rather we need to fix our traditional schools. I agree with this theory and my record clearly shows that, however, I am not willing to deny another generation of inner city children a quality education and chance for success in life while we tinker around with the edges in an effort to fix our city schools. We must provide choice for our inner city families while at the same time aggressively working to transform what is too often determined to be a failing traditional public school system

Sincerely,


SAM HOYT

MEMBER OF ASSEMBLY

cc: James Williams, Superintendent
City of Buffalo Board of Education

