



Committees:

Nominations – Vice Chair  
Education  
Jurisprudence  
Transportation  
Veterans Affairs &  
Military Installations

**DONNA CAMPBELL, MD**  
DISTRICT 25

District 25 Counties:

Bexar (part)  
Comal  
Guadalupe  
Hays  
Kendall  
Travis (part)

For Immediate Release:  
Thursday, June 16, 2016

Contact: Jon Oliver  
512-463-0125

**IN LETTER TO CITY COUNCIL, SENATOR CAMPBELL OPPOSES  
AUSTIN ORDINANCE THAT WOULD HARM CHARTER SCHOOLS**

AUSTIN—State Senator Donna Campbell delivered a letter to Mayor Adler and Austin City Council members on Thursday regarding City of Austin Agenda Item 73. The item of discussion centers around an ordinance that would add bureaucracy and restrict the expansion and growth of open-enrollment public charter schools in Austin. In the letter, Senator Campbell warns of the negative impact such a proposal would have for the thousands of parents and children in Austin who take advantage of public charter schools. She also noted the fact that there are over 110,000 students on public charter school waiting lists, and that most, if not all, public charter schools already operate on limited budgets.

**"The City of Austin's proposal to add costly regulations that restrict the expansion of open-enrollment public charter schools - which do not receive any facility funding from taxpayers - represents dangerous meddling in the education of our children," Senator Campbell stated. "It seems that they are being unfairly singled out in summer when school is not in session to keep parents, teachers, and students from being fully engaged. Many of these schools are exemplary and given the financial limitations they already operate under, I can't imagine tying their hands any further."**

The full text of Senator Campbell's letter is included below:

June 16, 2016

Dear Mayor Adler and Austin City Council Members,

I am writing to express my concerns and the concerns I've heard from constituents about a proposed ordinance that would limit and restrict the expansion of open-enrollment public charter schools throughout Austin. Not only would this ordinance have a devastating impact on the educational opportunities available to economically disadvantaged families and children, it could be a detriment to the future workforce of the city.

Open-enrollment public charter schools in Texas already receive on average \$1,000 less per student than traditional independent school districts. In the case of Austin, the deficit is even greater. Despite funding limitations, open-enrollment public charter schools are very popular with parents - there is currently a statewide waiting list of over 110,000 students - and they must meet greater accountability measures than traditional public schools.

Additionally, public charter schools receive no state aid for facilities, cannot hold bond elections, and may not enter into Land Development Agreements under the Texas Local Government Code, prohibiting them from negotiating with the city and putting them at a disadvantage with ISDs. Relying on fiscal responsibility, public charter schools stretch the funds they receive for both instructional and facility costs. It would be a mistake to tie their hands any further with unnecessary regulations that would only drive dollars from the classroom.

I encourage you to help, not hinder, charter schools in Austin. They provide an invaluable service to parents and children, and many students thrive thanks to their unique educational model. Please vote against this ordinance or at least support the requested amendment from charter school stakeholders regarding impervious cover. I beg you to think about the children and the future workforce you are impacting before you vote.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Campbell, M.D." in a cursive style.

Senator Donna Campbell, M.D.  
Texas Senate District 25

###

*Senator Campbell represents Senate District 25 and sits on the Education Committee.*