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MASSACHUSETTS

January 28, 2016

Honorable Robert A. DeLeo  
Speaker  
Massachusetts House of Representatives  
Room 356  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Mr. Speaker,

As the leaders of seven of Massachusetts' largest business and civic organizations, we commend you for your continued support for the expansion of public charter school opportunities as expressed in your annual address to House members yesterday. We are committed to working with you and your colleagues to craft legislation that will expand public charter school opportunities for students and families in Massachusetts.

With a 20-year track record of success, charter schools are neither an "experiment" nor a problem to be "reformed" as some would contend. They are a highly effective solution to one of America's deepest and most persistent challenges: the achievement gap between wealthy and economically-challenged students and public schools districts, gaps that are particularly prevalent among black and Hispanic students.

Public charter schools make up just 4% of all public schools in Massachusetts and would continue to comprise just a small percentage under any of the expansion proposals currently under consideration. This small cohort of schools, however, has had an outsized positive impact on students, communities and the broader public education system, just as they were intended to do.

In order to be responsive to the overwhelming public call for the expansion of charter schools, charter school legislation enacted by the General Court should:

- Include a meaningful and sustainable expansion of charter schools and charter school enrollment that is driven by demand and responsive to parent and student choices to pursue public charter school opportunities; and
- Avoid negative impacts to key fiscal and governance attributes that empower the success of charter public schools.

We believe that House Bill 3804, filed by Governor Baker last October, is a good model for a legislative solution, particularly as supplemented by provisions in the Governor's FY17 budget proposal that would provide additional reimbursement assistance to traditional public schools.

We continue to support the ballot initiative to expand charter school access and we are pleased to see polls that indicate an overwhelming level of support among likely voters. We urge you to craft a legislative solution that reflects the meaningful expansion of public charter schools the public demands.

Sincerely,



Christopher Anderson  
Massachusetts High Technology Council



Richard Lord  
Associated Industries of Massachusetts



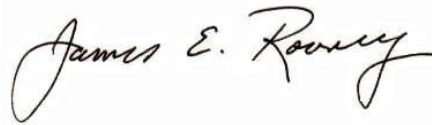
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