

MASSACHUSETTS  
**HIGHTECHNOLOGYCOUNCIL**

*Dedicated to Growth... Committed to Action*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**August 5, 2015**

**Contact:**  
Mark J. Gallagher  
(m) 617.347.1917  
[mark@mhtc.org](mailto:mark@mhtc.org)

***Mass. High Tech. Council Supports Initiative Petition to Allow Fair Access to Public Charter Schools***

***State's leading technology group highlights moral and economic imperative of expanding access to charter schools.***

Today the Massachusetts High Technology Council joined a group of educators and civic leaders to begin the process of qualifying an initiative petition for the November 2016 ballot that would allow more children - particularly those in Massachusetts' highest-need communities - to attend public charter schools.

Council President Chris Anderson is among the original ten signers of the petition. **“For more than three decades, the Council has been deeply engaged in delivering reform to the state’s public education system, which despite its best-in-the-nation status, is leaving far too many students behind”** said Anderson. One of the Council’s top priorities has been support for expanding innovative school options for children, parents and educators throughout the Commonwealth, particularly through the expansion of charter public schools.

The proposed ballot measure, entitled *An Act to Allow Fair Access to Public Charter Schools*, would allow the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to authorize the creation or expansion of a small number of public charter schools each year based on where those seats are needed most. The measure gives special preference to public charter schools in communities with underperforming schools, who are most likely to have a high number of children on charter school waiting lists.

In 2010, the Council and a coalition of business and civic leaders successfully advocated for raising existing caps on charter schools in certain school districts. Those higher enrollment limits, however, were maxed out in just a few years, and today 37,000 students are on waiting lists to attend charter schools. In 2014, the Mass. House of Representatives passed legislation that would allow the additional expansion of charter schools in underperforming school districts but the changes were rejected by the State Senate. **“The enactment of additional and lasting reforms expanding student access to charter schools is an urgent moral and economic imperative,”** said Anderson. **“The Council looks forward to again playing a strategic role in advancing these critical reforms by working with Governor Baker, members of the legislature and all stakeholders who**

**are committed to ensuring all students have access to the quality schools they deserve.”**

The stakes for Massachusetts are high. There is a strong sense of urgency among business and civic leaders – in particular Council members – to bring long overdue reforms and innovations to the state’s public education system. This urgency is underscored by advances made by students in classrooms around the world – particularly in math and science. While the Massachusetts school system overall leads the nation, there are too many students and teachers trapped in underperforming schools. Massachusetts still has a long way to go to bring true educational opportunities – and rewarding career pathways – to all its students.

**About the Massachusetts High Technology Council – [www.mhtc.org](http://www.mhtc.org)**

The Massachusetts High Technology Council is the oldest and only cross-sector association of technology, professional services, and higher education CEOs and senior executives in Massachusetts. As advocates for public policies and programs that create and maintain a healthy and competitive business climate, the Council has lead winning strategies for 37 years. In addition to its mission focus on cost competitiveness and talent development, the Council also works to preserve and strengthen federal defense assets in Massachusetts and support a robust and productive interaction among those assets and the public and private technology sectors across New England.

###