

Charter Industry: Under-Regulated and Thus Over-the-Top Corrupt—Yet Current Charter Advocates Resist All Accountability and Transparency Rules

The charter school initiators a couple decades ago convinced unsuspecting state officials throughout the nation that charters could outperform the traditional public school system on less tax money if transparency and accountability would be greatly diminished. Of course, they chose words like “eliminating bureaucracy” instead of what they really meant—diminish accountability and transparency. The huge sums of campaign money the charter folks made available to political campaigns incentivized federal and state officials to lend their support to the charter business. Two charter operators in Ohio gave a total of an estimated \$8 million to state officials as their respective businesses raked in escalating tax dollars. One such operator provided students a cheap education while collecting as estimated \$500 million for phantom students. Over the years statewide officials and legislators ignored what was obvious—criminal activity.

The high incidence of fraud, corruption, and huge profits on the backs of students are the result of deregulating the charter industry. State officials seem incapable of enacting laws and regulations to combat the ills of the charter industry, even though students are harmed and taxpayers ripped off.

The feds have been appropriating \$400 million annually to expand the charter industry, which extends the fraud, abuse and corruption. Now, the federal administration is proposing new rules to reduce waste and profiteering, but the charter lobby is fighting the proposed regulation tooth and nail. No doubt the charter lobbyists are writing a plethora of checks to political campaigns to kill the proposed regulations.