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National Alliance of Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) President and CEO: The one common thing in the charter school movement is this notion that we wanted to reimagine public education and make it better.

In a recent interview with Education Week, Nina Reeves, President and CEO of NAPCS clearly argued that charter schools are public schools and that charters outperform traditional public schools. Ms. Reeves must not be familiar with the Ohio charter industry.

Ms. Reeves proclaimed that charter schools are public because they are so designated in law as public schools. In some cases the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has ruled that charter schools are private for bargaining purposes. Public tax money being transferred to charters is the most compelling argument for charters being designated as public. In fact, some privatization proponents argue that any school that receives public money is a public school.

The courts have not settled the question of whether charters are public or private. It seems that the question turns on whether charter operators are “state actors”. Do they operate as agents of the state? This is a question that has arisen in the most recent filing in the ECOT case in Ohio. If the ECOT Man, Bill Lager, is considered a state actor, then he is in a world of hurt for diverting hundreds of millions of dollars to himself.

The charter industry wants it both ways. They want a private designation to avoid transparency and accountability; but they also want a public designation to get a full ride on public money.

The idea that charter operators want to reimagine public is absurd. The most conspicuous “reimagining” in the charter world is fraud, corruption, dumbed-down education, obscene profits and mediocre results.

State and federal officials that continue to advance the charter school agenda in view of the sordid narrative of the charter industry are committing fraud on the public.

Where is the outrage from taxpayers?