



Stakes are High for New State Lawmakers to Improve Education Laws

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New report finds that even with federal prodding, most states have failed to enact successful state charter laws

Even with federal incentives and tremendous media attention over the past year, weak laws in a majority of states continue to be the greatest barrier to charter school success, according to an analysis of the country's 41 charter school laws by The Center for Education Reform (CER). CER's 2011 ranking and scorecard - their 12th annual overview - gives 29 states a grade of C or lower for their law, showcasing a real need for substantive changes to their laws if they are to permit the creation of innovative and successful charter schools.

"Thousands of newly elected state lawmakers are poised to step into their positions to govern. It's critical they know that - despite the media hype and federal incentives created in the last year - expansive, quality schooling opportunities are only available in half of all states," said Jeanne Allen, president of The Center for Education Reform. "States with weak laws impose barriers to charter creation and even the stronger law states have numerous regulations and limitations that impede charter growth. The nation's attention was riveted on *Waiting for Superman*, the much-acclaimed documentary, earlier this year. It's time we recognized we cannot solve the problems so eloquently outlined in *"Superman"* without changing laws across the U.S."

Forty states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws that allow for charter schools, resulting in 5,400 operating this school year, according to CER. But the laws vary considerably in composition, as is clearly evidenced in this report. Only three - Washington, DC, Minnesota and California - have laws that provide optimal conditions for the establishment, growth and success of charters. Only nine other states have strong laws on the books and have seen demonstrated student achievement gains.

"The November elections ushered in unprecedented numbers of new state lawmakers who campaigned with education reform as a priority. 2011 can be transformative for educational excellence if lawmakers have a thorough understanding of what it takes to succeed. The 12th annual Charter School Laws Across the States is the first of many roadmaps the Center will provide to ensure that laws are properly developed and implemented to serve the educational needs of children in an increasingly competitive world," said Allen.

To download a copy of CER's *2011 Charter School Laws Across the States - Ranking and Scorecard*, visit www.charterschoolresearch.com.

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The Center for Education Reform drives the creation of better educational opportunities for all children. CER changes laws, minds and cultures to allow good schools to flourish.

