

SENATE BILL 194

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By: **Senators Kelley, Benson, Conway, Currie, Ferguson, Jones–Rodwell,
King, Pugh, Reilly, and Young**

Introduced and read first time: January 18, 2013

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Education – Charter Schools – Study to Recommend Improvements to the**
3 **Maryland Public Charter School Program**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland State Department of Education to conduct
5 a certain study and provide certain recommendations to the Governor and the
6 General Assembly on or before a certain date regarding improvements to the
7 Maryland Public Charter School Program; declaring a certain intent of the
8 General Assembly and a certain priority of the State; providing for the
9 termination of this Act; and generally relating to improving the Maryland
10 Public Charter School Program.

11 Preamble

12 WHEREAS, This year marks the tenth anniversary of the passage of the
13 Maryland Public Charter School Program; and

14 WHEREAS, Charter schools are founded upon the principles of academic
15 excellence and increasing opportunity for all families to choose the most promising
16 schools to serve their children; and

17 WHEREAS, Charter schools are performance–based public schools that receive
18 the autonomy to implement innovative strategies to improve the design and quality of
19 providing a public education in exchange for adhering to strict accountability for
20 student achievement; and

21 WHEREAS, Charter schools demonstrate the collective responsibility of all
22 Maryland communities to ensure high quality educational experiences for students, by
23 the founding of such schools by parents, teachers, and community organizations; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, An outstanding charter school system in Maryland provides the
2 competition and motivation for all public schools to increase academic performance,
3 expand choices in public education, and continue to close the achievement gap; and

4 WHEREAS, Since the passage of the Maryland Public Charter School Program
5 in 2003, charter schools have expanded to a total of 52 schools in seven jurisdictions,
6 and the State strongly supports the continuous growth of charter schools since strong
7 schools are the building blocks of a strong and prosperous state; and

8 WHEREAS, Maryland currently occupies the next-to-last position in national
9 studies regarding effective charter school laws; and

10 WHEREAS, Maryland was not awarded the federal charter school program
11 grant that supports the opening and expansion of charter schools due to the current
12 posture of the Maryland Public Charter School Program; now, therefore,

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
14 MARYLAND, That:

15 (a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the growth of charter
16 schools in the State be continued and that families be offered increased educational
17 choices and options through charter schools.

18 (b) The General Assembly declares that a reflection on the status and
19 effectiveness of Title 9 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code, the Maryland
20 Public Charter School Program, shall be a State priority.

21 (c) On or before December 15, 2013, the Maryland State Department of
22 Education shall conduct a study and provide recommendations to the Governor and, in
23 accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly,
24 regarding:

25 (1) Maryland's inability to meet the criteria of the federal charter
26 school program grant due to the current posture of the Maryland Public Charter
27 School Program;

28 (2) expenditures relating to opening and operating a high quality
29 charter school and the amount of per pupil cost allocations provided to charter schools
30 based upon school system total revenues;

31 (3) the impact of the condition of the facilities, and the funding of
32 facilities, on charter school growth; and

33 (4) the current state of local policies and practices that impact the
34 sustainability of charter schools in the State.

1 (d) The study conducted and recommendations provided under subsection (c)
2 of this section shall include:

3 (1) a review and analysis of charter school laws deemed effective in
4 other states for the purpose of comparison to the Maryland Public Charter School
5 Program;

6 (2) a review and analysis of research regarding innovative practices
7 for charter schools and charter school authorizers; and

8 (3) recommendations for improvements to the Maryland Public
9 Charter School Program.

10 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
11 July 1, 2013. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of June 30,
12 2014, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be
13 abrogated and of no further force and effect.