



Foundation for Education Reform & Accountability

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“Exclusive Seven”: Group of Senators Benefitted from School Choice, Voted to Deny Similar Options for Disadvantaged Kids

Nearly half the state senators voting against a bill this week to raise the legal limit on the number of charter schools were the beneficiaries of private schooling or a selective district school according to an analysis released today by the Foundation for Education Reform and Accountability.

“Senators who themselves reaped the advantages of school choice should at least support charter school opportunities for thousands of children trapped in low-performing district schools,” said B. Jason Brooks, Director of Research for the New York Foundation for Education Reform and Accountability. “Sadly, some of these state senators evidently can’t bring themselves to support a choice of a better school for those less fortunate than themselves.”

On Monday the New York State Senate voted to approve a bill (# S.7678) to raise the cap on charter schools from 200 to 460. The bill included other measures to increase accountability and transparency in charter schools, and to boost the number of students with special needs attending charter schools. The vote for the bill was 45 in favor and 15 against – a 3-to-1 margin in favor.

“Private schooling is a great alternative to low-performing district schools for those who can afford to pay for it,” Brooks said. “In the public system, charter schools are often the only alternative for many children and this option will soon run out unless the state raises the charter cap.”

The Foundation’s analysis of the Senate vote compared those senators opposing the charter cap-hike bill to the results of a report released in January by the Foundation surveying the schools attended by state legislators for their K-12 education.

The “Exclusive Seven” state senators—some of whom attended private schools now charging nearly \$35,000 per year—voting against expanding public school choice with more charter schools are listed below:

1. **Neil Breslin** (46th Dist., Albany)
Vincentian Institute, Albany
2. **Thomas Duane** (29th Dist., Manhattan)
St. Andrew Avellino School, Flushing (\$4,335 tuition per year); *Holy Cross High School*, Flushing (\$7,550 tuition per year)
3. **Suzi Oppenheimer** (37th Dist., Port Chester)
The Calhoun School, Manhattan (\$34,530 tuition per year)
4. **Bill Perkins** (30th Dist., Manhattan)
Collegiate School, Manhattan (\$33,400 tuition per year; ranked #7 prep school in America by *Forbes Magazine*)
5. **Eric Schneiderman** (31st Dist., Manhattan)
Trinity School, Manhattan (\$34,535 tuition per year; ranked #1 prep school in America by *Forbes Magazine*)
6. **William Stachowski** (58th Dist., Buffalo)
St. Bernard's Grammar School, Buffalo
Bishop Ryan High School, Buffalo
7. **Toby Ann Stavisky** (16th Dist., Flushing)
Bronx High School of Science (selective public exam school; identified as one of the best school in America by *U.S. News & World Report*; only 12 percent of students admitted are Black or Hispanic)

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