



**SENATOR
JOE SCHIAVONI**
MINORITY LEADER
33RD DISTRICT

**Senate Education Committee
Testimony on Senate Bill 20
March 17, 2015**

Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Hite, and Ranking Member Sawyer, thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on Senate Bill 20 today. As you know, this is not the first time I have testified on this bill. I have decided to bring this bill forward again in order to emphasize the problems and need for legislative change regarding Ohio's public charter schools. However, from the beginning, I have always intended this bill to be simply a starting point for a much larger conversation on charter school reform. Chairwoman Lehner, I appreciate the many hours of discussion and debate that you and I have had on this issue for years. I am grateful for your efforts on transforming the environment of charter schools in Ohio, and for including my caucus in your charter school workgroup. It is therefore my hope that you will take the ideas in SB 20 (and in Senator Skindell's SB 59) and incorporate them as part of your final draft of the legislation that is a result of the workgroup. I am committed to a bipartisan effort, and it is my hope that you are as well.

This bill provides the much needed accountability, transparency, and uniform standards that is currently lacking when it comes to the oversight of public charter schools in the state of Ohio. Senate Bill 20 has **three** major components:

- Requires the Auditor of State to **annually** audit each charter school **operator** and **sponsor** on accounts, reports, records and files pertaining to their expenditures of public funds relating to the operation or sponsorship of that school.
- Requires each public charter school to set up a public records commission that will follow the requirements just like traditional public districts do. They will be required to meet at least once per year to review all records and dispose of obsolete records.
- Requires each nonpublic operator of a charter school and each nonpublic sponsor to comply with public records, just as if it were a public office. This pertains to public funds only.

The bottom line is that Ohioans deserve to know the truth about publicly funded schools no matter who they are owned and operated by. Thank you members of the committee, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.