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RE: Testimony, LDs 220 and 420

Greetings Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

These bills are essentially School Choice bills. The alliances that drive the School Choice movement, and are aggressively pushing it forward, are not educators. They are large corporations, billionaires, hedge fund managers, private investors and contractors, and even religious organizations.

The phenomenon of public school privatization and corporatization brings more questions and concerns than answers. The marriage between these alliances and politicians seems unethical. This political matrimony is not just about corporate management of education, which seems unethical in and of itself, but is also about what free market intervention means to democratic principles and processes. Does it truly promote an equalization of education for all? Will communities and parents remain in the driver's seat, or will they be reduced to consumers at the mercy of entrepreneurs and capitalists. Will every child be afforded equal educational opportunities, or will Choice options become a consumer-driven product for those able to afford them? Will less affluent families be left behind? Should education be something that parents and communities own, value, and strive to protect and improve upon despite its challenges? Does corporate dominance resign a citizenry to slavery and diminish the value of civic discourse? Does School Choice foster a democratic vision? Are citizens moved to act unethically in an effort to take funds they do not need and have no intention of using wisely?

This committee must take responsibility for answering these serious questions before taking favorable action on ANY School Choice legislation that comes before you for consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Edward S. Green