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## **STATEMENT FROM NJCF AND NJPCSA ON NJ AG'S OFFICE SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION IN NEWARK**

**Yesterday, the office of New Jersey's Attorney General filed a brief in the New Jersey Supreme Court in support of the expansion of six Newark public charter schools. According to the AG's office:**

*"As the record plainly reflects, the charter schools at issue embody precisely what the Charter School Program Act of 1996 (~~CSPA"), N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-1 to -18, was designed to achieve. All seven schools have served students and families of Newark for several years, yielding successful graduation rates, high test scores, and innovative learning environments for Newark's students. As a result of that success, more and more families each year have expressed a desire to send their children to these programs, as reflected in the extensive waiting lists that continued year to year. And it stands to reason that those schools would strive to accommodate those desires. With the resulting demand, the schools sought to expand their capacity to accommodate the public need and provide a quality education to more of Newark's student population. This is precisely the type of growth envisioned by the Legislature through the CSPA."*

*"Both the ELC and Amici overlook not just the law and evidence to the contrary, but a more fundamental point: a thorough and efficient education is being provided to students in traditional public schools and in charter schools, and the record is devoid of any evidence that the success of the charters was achieved at the expense of the quality of education at the district schools. "*

**New Jersey Children's Foundation Executive Director Kyle Rosenkrans and New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association President Harry Lee responded with the following statement:**

*"We applaud Attorney General Grewal's Office and Governor Murphy for recognizing what the Education Law Center does not and what charter advocates have been saying for years: public charter schools are a vital part of the public education system in Newark, families want more of them, and the expansion of Newark charters does nothing to harm other public schools."*

Both the NJ Charter Public Charter Schools Association and New Jersey Children's Foundation were granted Friend of the Court, or Amicus status by the State Supreme Court in the case.

Yesterday, NJCF released a poll of Newark voters which showed that not only are the free, open enrollment public schools of choice very successful, voters in the city support them in large numbers - **66% of Newarkers view the schools favorably and just 29% view them unfavorably.**

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**By a 2-to-1 margin, voters would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports expanding public charter schools:** 42% would be more likely to vote for such a candidate, 21% less likely. Among parents of children in public charter schools, it's 58% to 3%. Such a candidate would have an advantage with voters of all political affiliations, and with every racial and ethnic group, age group, and gender.

**The poll also found that, by a 57% to 25% margin, voters believe that public charter schools help improve public education.** By a similar 59-23 margin, voters agree that public charter schools are an important part of the public school landscape in Newark. That includes 69% of parents of school-age children, 53% of traditional public school parents, and 92% of public charter school parents.

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### **About Public Charter Schools**

Charter schools are tuition-free public schools run by non-profit organizations open to all students regardless of zip code, race/ethnicity or ability level. Charter schools operate with more flexibility than traditional public schools in exchange for increased accountability and high financial, academic and managerial standards by an authorizer. A "charter" is a contract with an authorizer detailing the school's mission, program, performance goals and methods of assessments. In New Jersey, the New Jersey Department of Education serves as the sole authorizer and oversees all public charter schools in the state.

### **About New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association**

The New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association (NJPCSA) is the non-profit membership association that represents the state's charter school community and, by extension, charter school students and their parents. There are currently 87 charter schools in New Jersey serving approximately 57,000 students. We are committed to advancing quality public education for New Jersey's children through the cultivation of excellent public charter schools. The Association seeks to influence legislative and policy environments, leverage collective advocacy, and provide resources to support our members in developing and operating high quality, public charter schools.