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April 4, 2019

Senator Rebecca Millett  
Representative Victoria Kornfield  
Chairs, Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: House Bill 231 (L.D. 307)

Dear Chairpersons:

I write to you today in opposition to House Bill 231, which would permanently cap the number of charter schools authorized by the Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC). In our experience as national experts in quality authorizing practices, the best way to determine how many charter schools should exist is not an arbitrary cap, but instead is for authorizers to make smart, merit-based decisions about each proposed and existing charter school.

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) is an independent voice for effective charter school policies that lead to more great public schools. We know from practice and research that a high-quality, independent charter authorizer like MCSC is an asset for the entire education system. Independent authorizers provide expertise, scale, and capacity to demonstrate best practices that school district authorizers are often unable to achieve.

In 2017, MCSC voluntarily underwent a rigorous evaluation of its authorizing practices by NACSA which found that MCSC has taken a thoughtful approach to establishing quality charter authorizing focused on school performance. The evaluation found that in its seven years of operation, MCSC has demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement that will ensure the Commission remains at the forefront of the sector as its portfolio continues to mature.

Students, families, and taxpayers are served best by allowing school quality and performance to guide important oversight decisions. As you consider legislation that would impact the Commission's ability to authorize quality educational options, we hope you remain focused on the best interest of Maine's students and families.

We look forward to continuing to work with authorizers and stakeholders in Maine on evidence-based policies and practices that have been shown to improve quality. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jason Zwara, NACSA's Policy Manager, at [jasonz@qualitycharters.org](mailto:jasonz@qualitycharters.org) or (716) 908-8402.

Sincerely,

Greg Richmond, President & CEO  
National Association of Charter School Authorizers