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**Memorandum of Support
S7666A (Liu) / A8801 (Benedetto)**

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Class Size Matters strongly urges the Legislature to pass S7666A and A8801 to provide the Board of Regents with the final approval authority over all proposed and renewed charter schools

Class Size Matters is a non-profit that advocates for the right of children to be provided with smaller classes and an equitable education. We strongly support S7666 and A8801, to give the Board of Regents final authority over which charter schools are authorized and which are renewed. Currently, the Board of Regents can reject submissions by the SUNY Charter Committee for good cause, but that rejection is only temporary since SUNY can go ahead and authorize or renew these schools regardless. The Board of Regents have found serious problems with SUNY Charter Committee's authorizations for applications, revisions, or renewals of approximately forty charter schools, and despite this, SUNY has gone ahead and approved these proposals with no or only minor modifications.

The growth of charter schools has been most rapid in NYC, where nearly 300 charter schools have been authorized and continue to divert increasing funds from our public schools, amounting to more than more than \$2.4 billion annually from Department of Education's budget, not including facilities aid. Charter schools are also taking up increased space in our public-school buildings, which could otherwise be used to reduce class size. And although the charter cap has been officially reached in the city, the SUNY Charter Committee has circumvented that cap by recently approving a new charter high school in The Bronx, claiming it was an expansion instead.

The SUNY Committee has also repeatedly authorized the expansion of charter schools in communities and school districts where there is fervent opposition to these schools and allows charter schools to be authorized and sited in NYC districts different from where the public hearings were held, completely undermining the legal requirement for parent and community input.

SUNY has renewed many charter schools and allowed them to expand and replicate, such as the Success Academy charters, despite the fact that they continue to violate student civil and privacy rights, as confirmed by decisions of courts, as well as the State Education Department and US Department of Education. Moreover, many of them continue to enroll fewer high-needs students, especially children with special needs and English Language Learners, and "push out" struggling students, without any apparent attempt on the part of their authorizers to ensure that they refrain from such abusive tactics. In fact, SUNY has renewed the charters of Success Academy schools prematurely, years before their charters were due to expire, encouraging them to continue their problematic practices.

In short, SUNY can no longer be trusted to be working in compliance with the intent of the charter school law, nor in the best interests of NYC students or taxpayers. Thus, the Board of Regents should be empowered to make the final decisions on all charter school authorizations and renewals.

For more information, please contact Class Size Matters at info@classsizematters.org