

# State Policy Update for 2010

June 29, 2010

- States are experiencing their worst budget crises in recent memory
- These budget problems are necessitating major funding cuts in public education
- Prime opportunity for opponents to push to cuts funds to charters and halt their growth through new caps and moratoria

- Bulwarks against these efforts:
  - Our champions in governor's offices and legislatures
  - President Obama and Secretary Duncan, especially via their use of the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top competitive grant program

- State Highlights:
  - AK: Removed the state's cap on charters.
  - CT: Lifted the state's caps on high-performing charter schools.
  - HI: Partially lifted its cap on start-up charters.
  - IA: Removed the state's cap of 20 conversion charters and the pilot nature of the charter law.

# Caps and Moratoria

- MA: Made a partial but significant lift in the most restrictive of the state's caps.
- MI: Partially lifted the state's cap on university-authorized charters.
- NH: Removed the state's moratorium on state-authorized charters.
- NY: Lifted the state's cap from 200 charters to 460 charters.

# Caps and Moratoria

- OK: Lifted the state's numerical caps on charters and expanded the number of districts in which charters can open.
- RI: Partially lifted its cap from 20 charters to 35 charters and removed the statewide enrollment limits for charter schools.
- UT: Removed the state's cap on charter school enrollment.

- State Highlights
  - AZ: Expanded eligible authorizers to include a state university, a community college district with an enrollment of at least 15,000 students or a consortium of community college districts with a combined enrollment of at least 15,000 students.
  - CO: Created charter school and authorizer standards review committee.

- HI: Clarified oversight responsibilities for authorizers and created a renewal process for charter schools.
- OK: Expanded eligible authorizing entities to include more school districts, more technology center school districts, more postsecondary institutions, and federally recognized Native American tribes for certain types of schools.



- UT: Allowed colleges and universities to authorize charter schools, subject to approval of the state board of education.
- VA: Elevated the role of the state board of education in the approval and renewal processes.

- State Highlights
  - AK: Created a charter school construction, lease, and major maintenance grant program
  - AZ: Allowed a tax exemption for consumption of food and drink at charter schools (similar to districts)
  - CO: Allowed charter schools to form multi-school collaboratives
  - HI: Make existing public school buildings more available to public charter schools

- State Highlights:
  - MS: Enacted a law to allow the conversion of failing schools to charter schools.
  - AL: Tabled charter bills in House and Senate Education Committees
  - KY: Passed a bill out of the Senate, but not the House
  - ME: Failed to amend “innovation school” bill to allow charters

- SD: Passed a law that would allow one charter school for Native American students if the state won a Race to the Top grant.
- WV: A special session is reconvening on July 19, at which time we expect the legislature to again take up a charter schools bill.

# Impact of Race to the Top

- 15 states have lifted caps and one state has passed a new law
- Significant vs. Symbolic
- Examples of Significant: Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New York

# Impact of Race to the Top

- Examples of Symbolic: Alaska, Iowa, and Mississippi
- While there has been significant progress on lifting caps on charters, much work remains ahead to create strong policy environments across the country (funding equity, facilities support, and authorizing environments)