



OPPOSE SB 28

“The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive and judicial in the same hands, whether of one, a few or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed or elective, may justly be the very definition of tyranny.”

-James Madison, Federalist No. 51, 1788

A number of bills have been filed and heard by the 87th Texas Legislature related to civics education and the importance and relevance of the work of the Founding Fathers. These bills argue the need to center America’s Founding Documents that have secured the rights of the American people for well over two hundred years. **Unfortunately, there are other bills such as SB 28 being heard in the same halls that seek to undo the founding principles upon which our country was built.**

The Founding Fathers were well-acquainted with a long-held tenet of democracy, namely that the accumulation of power by a single person or body of government is the greatest threat to liberty. The Texas State Teachers Association is opposed to Senate Bill (SB) 28 because it is inherently in opposition to the very philosophy of our Founding Fathers. SB 28 would expand an already perverse measure of special privilege to special-interest charter schools and tighten the muzzle of elected officials and the communities they represent. Although the bill has been branded “the charter equity bill,” SB 28 would afford charter schools privileges no truly public independent school district has, or ever should have. In particular, SB 28:

Exempts charter schools from all zoning laws, giving them special privilege to locate a school facility literally anywhere

- Charter schools would have special privilege to locate a school facility on any property in any city or county regardless of local regulation.
- The commissioner of education would have “exclusive jurisdiction over the establishment and location of charters.”

Limits the authority of the democratically elected State Board of Education (SBOE) body

- SBOE is the only publicly elected and accountable body involved in the entire charter approval process.
- SBOE veto power would be reduced to a supermajority, which would disenfranchise communities most affected by new charter schools.

Prohibits school districts from informing the public about the impact of a proposed new campus

- School districts would no longer be allowed to even provide information to TEA regarding the charter school’s impact on the district or defense of its district programs.

Ignores existing inequities in the system

- Charter schools already do not give notice to the general public or conduct public meetings for new campuses approved through amendments.
- Unelected, self-selecting governing boards of charter schools alone decide where to locate new campuses but often reside in distant cities or states.
- Local voters must approve funding for new ISD school facilities. Charter schools encumber taxpayers by decree.
- The appointed commissioner of education has the sole approval of new campuses, and he has approved the building of 637 new campuses in the past 8 years without any public meeting or vote.

According to principles of the Founding Fathers this bill represents a great threat to our liberty — SB 28 “accumulates all powers in the same hands” while silencing the will of the people.