

# Protect Parent and Taxpayer Rights: OPPOSE HB 1707

April 26, 2023

## Don't limit the rights of parents and taxpayers.

- HB 1707 does not ensure that charter schools must provide the same protections and fair treatment that public school districts provide to parents and taxpayers when building new campuses.
- In fact, this bill will limit the right of parents and taxpayers to voice their opinion on decisions that affect their property rights and home values, such as traffic control, setbacks from property lines, building heights, and more. It applies equally to small towns and large urban areas.

*From a Central Texas Parent: "Without any prior notice to my neighborhood, a new two-story charter campus began construction on our quiet residential street. My neighbors and I had no opportunity to address our concerns about traffic congestion, setback of only 14 feet from property lines, construction noise from 4 AM to almost midnight, and other issues that impact our lives and neighborhood.*

## Unelected charter boards are not accountable to parents and taxpayers.

- HB 1707 threatens neighborhoods and subdivisions by giving unelected charter board members - who often do not even live in the community (or even in Texas) - unprecedented power over where a charter school can locate a new campus even in residential neighborhoods.

## Big differences in how charter schools treat parents and taxpayers.

- Supporters of HB 1707 claim that it will ensure that charter schools are treated the same as public school districts related to development, but there are already BIG differences in how charters treat parents and taxpayers that are NOT addressed in this bill:

Protect Parents and Taxpayers	Public School District	Charter School
Board members are elected by voters - accountable directly to parents and taxpayers and must live in the community	✓	X
Voters must approve financing for new school buildings	✓	X
Districts hold multiple meetings to inform parents/public and seek input on proposed new campuses	✓	X
Districts give the public advance notice about a proposed campus	✓	X

- Also, charter schools are not subject to the same conflict of interest and nepotism laws that apply to school districts, so charter officials can profit by leasing property they own to the charter school they operate. See Houston Chronicle/San Antonio Express News [article](#).

## Permitting rules may differ, but it's based on need, and apply to BOTH charters and districts.

- Charter schools say they are treated differently from public school districts. However, city permitting differs for both charter and public school district campuses alike, depending on the specific need of each campus, where it is located, the potential impact on the neighborhood, and safety of students.
- For example, there may be a need to conduct a traffic control study for a new district high school but not a new district elementary campus because of differences in projected traffic flow between the two campuses. While treated differently, the two campuses are not treated unfairly.