



March 3, 2025

The Honorable Chip Neiman
House Speaker, Wyoming State Legislature
State Capitol, 200 West 24th Street
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

Re: Veto of House Enrolled Act No. 47/House Bill 0094 - Charter School Authorizations -
Amendments

Dear Speaker Neiman,

After careful consideration, I am writing to inform you of my decision to exercise my authority to veto House Enrolled Act No. 47, which removes the cap on the number of charter schools that the Wyoming Charter School Authorizing Board may authorize. While I continue to enthusiastically support school choice in Wyoming and the role that high-quality charter schools can play in our education system, I cannot, in good conscience, approve an expansion of charter schools at a time when our public education system faces significant financial uncertainty and the framework to support the expansion of Charter Schools remains incomplete.

The recent district court decision rendered by Judge Peter Froelicher determined that the Wyoming Legislature has unconstitutionally underfunded the state's public schools. This ruling highlights an urgent issue that must be addressed before we consider authorizing additional charter schools. The Legislature's failure to fully fund the External Cost Adjustment and other inflationary factors, its approval of universal education savings accounts, ongoing tax reductions that primarily impact education funding, and the unchecked expansion of charter schools send conflicting messages about its commitment to adequately fund public education. The financial strain on our system, combined with the litigation, raises concerns about whether Wyoming is fulfilling its constitutional duty to support public schools.

Without a sustainable, transparent plan to ensure adequate funding for public schools, education savings accounts, and charter schools alike, lifting the cap on charter school authorizations is both premature and irresponsible. On the other hand, Senator Schuler's proposed amendments on this bill offered a balanced and responsible approach to expansion. Yet they were rejected by the Senate Education Committee missing an opportunity to ensure thoughtful, strategic growth in Wyoming's charter sector.

As we approach the recalibration process, I urge the Legislature to engage in serious, transparent, and data-driven discussions about fulfilling its constitutional duty to fund public education. Since 2021, I have called for a comprehensive review of charter school legislation during the interim to ensure that any newly authorized schools receive the essential resources and support to thrive, rather than being set up for failure. I am deeply disappointed that the Legislature has ignored the critical issue as well as constructive opportunities to ensure Wyoming can cultivate a fertile landscape for Charters beyond just throwing the gates open. Until these challenges are resolved, and more resolute progress to establishing charters is established, I cannot support the authorization of additional schools and risk replicating the struggles already existent.

This veto is not a rejection of charter schools - it is a call for responsible governance, fiscal accountability and a commitment to ensuring every student in Wyoming has access to a well-funded, high quality education.

Sincerely,



Mark Gordon
Governor

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cc: The Honorable Bo Biteman, President of the Senate
Chief Clerk, Wyoming House of Representatives
Chief Clerk, Wyoming Senate
The Honorable Chuck Gray, Secretary of State