

**TESTIMONY
OF
BOB KAUTZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MAINE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
And the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Hearing Date: March 18, 2013

LR 1046 “An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2014 and June 30, 2015.”

Senators Hill and Millett, Representatives Rotundo and MacDonald, and Members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Bob Kautz and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Charter School Commission. I am here today to present testimony for those items for the commission presented in LR 1046.

The commission was established in Public Law 2011, chapter 414. It consists of 7 members appointed by the State Board of Education for 3-year terms. Three members must be members of the state board, and those 3 members shall nominate the other 4 members who must be approved by a majority vote of the state board.

Members appointed to the commission must have diverse professional experience in education, social services, youth training, business startup and administration, accounting and finance, strategic planning and nonprofit governance.

The state board shall give proper consideration to the 4 candidates nominated and appointed by state board members with experience in a noncharter public school in the State in one of the following positions: school board member, superintendent, teacher and special education director.

The commission shall adopt rules for the organization and operation of the commission and to develop, implement and refine its procedures for authorizing public charter schools in this State.

The commission is the sole authorizer in this State for virtual public charter schools, except that a local school board may authorize a public charter school within its jurisdiction that integrates online and on-site instruction.

The commission may: solicit, invite, and evaluate applications from organizers of proposed public charter schools; approve applications that meet identified educational needs; deny applications that do not meet identified educational needs; create a framework to guide the development of charter schools; negotiate and execute sound charter contracts with each approved public charter

school; monitor the performance and compliance of public charter schools; and determine whether each charter contract merits renewal or revocation.

The **baseline budget** for the commission may be found on page **EDU-6** of the **Committee Document**. The General Fund request is \$19,803 in each year of the biennium. The Other Special Revenue Funds request is \$500 in each year of the biennium. When new Other Special Revenue Funds accounts are established a base amount of \$500 is allocated.

The commission has **one initiative (Ref. #660 and 661)** that may also be found on page **EDU-6** of the **Committee Document**. This initiative increases funding by \$130,197 in each year of the biennium. It also increases allocation by \$18,000 for each year of the biennium.

This initiative provides funding for a part-time Executive Director and administrative support. It also provides funding to cover travel and general operating expenditures for the commission.

This concludes my testimony for the Maine Charter School Commission. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have at this time.