

# 2017-Reflections: A Conversation with Howard Fuller and Joe ...

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## SPEAKERS

Dr. Howard Fuller, Eric Premack, Viola Davis, Dr. Darlene Chambers, Chris Norwood, Jim Goenner, Ph.D., Jeanne Allen, Dr. Joe Nathan, Unnamed Speaker, Tony Simmons

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**J** Jim Goenner, Ph.D. 00:07

We are excited to have all of you here tonight. Part of our passion is that we love people. We love ideas. And we love execution. And so I went and I found a Steve Jobs quote that says, 'Ideas are worth nothing unless executed.' So on behalf of Jill, our entire team at the National Charter School Institute, we're thrilled to be able to host you. We're also thrilled to have two legends in the charter school movement. And more importantly, in the civil rights and education reform efforts. Dr. Howard Fuller and Dr. Joe Nathan. [Clapping] So I have the privilege to just say a few words, and then I'm gonna turn it over to Dr. Darlene Chambers, my colleague at the institute. So our goal tonight is to be a bit provocative. We want to get into ideas. And so we've got these two gentlemen, for 90 minutes. And 90 minutes may seem like a long time, but it's gonna fly because of the ideas, the knowledge, the experience and the expertise that's brought to the table. Plus the people in this room. We actually have two state senators that sponsored and helped pass their charter school laws, Senator Ember Reichgott Junge from Minnesota. [Clapping] And former state Indiana Senator Teresa Lubbers. [Clapping] So a little bit about the institute. We're a 501(c)(3). We're headquartered in Michigan. We work with authorizers, board, schools, management companies, facility financiers and an occasional policymaker. And what we try and do is help people implement the idea well, and when I say the idea, chartering was an idea. It was an idea that talked about how to improve public education for all kids, and how does competition and the dynamics that come with it make everybody better. And so that's our goal is to try and do that. We're also trying to get our voice louder in the ideas. So last year in Nashville, we were able to host Ted Kolderie, who's kind of one of those grandfathering pioneers. And this year, we've got Howard and Joe. Ideas, as you know, are so powerful, and how they diffuse how they get implemented is worth studying. And so one of our projects is that we are now putting together a digital library that is going to collect the original source works, from the passage of laws to the passage of authorizers to the passage of first schools. And so it's something we're very excited about. We've had Ted Kolderie agree to donate his works. Embers donated her works. We've got Governor Engler from Michigan, and now others. We had a pre meeting tonight with some key people talking about ideas, who are some of the people that would have those founding works, and how can

we put that all together? But the question really came out why? Why? Right. And so we know from Simon Sinek's book, the key to inspiring people to action is why. And so from my perspective, the why comes from a quote from Confucius that says, 'Study the past, if you're going to define the future.' And so what we see here tonight are people that are going to define the future. You've been creating it. And so part of that is bringing together what's worked, what hasn't, what were the theories of action, and how do we put them to work. So with that, we are really excited. We also have many of our teammates from the institute that work with the Epicenter platform, which is a digital platform now in 20 plus states that's helping schools, boards, and authorizers align, so they can streamline and regulate all the regulatory reporting process. You might smile at that if you're a charter school idea purist, because they were supposed to be freed from all the rules and regulations. But the reality is, you know, living at as charter schools, public schools are some of the heaviest regulated agencies in all of America. So we're excited about that. We're also taking it to new levels in the facility financing, and portfolio and performance management. Books. So Howard's book, 'No Struggles, No Progress' is here. And Joe's book, "Charter Schools: Creating Hope and Opportunities" here. And so if you get a copy, you may even be able to get the authors to sign it. So with that, I get the opportunity to introduce these two. I said, "How would you like to be introduced?" And Howard said, "Briefly."

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 04:40

It's hard to do briefly with Howard.

**J** Jim Goenner, Ph.D. 04:42

It is hard to do briefly with Howard. So I simply want to say this. I started in to charter schools in 1995. And there were these people that you heard about, your read about, and then you had a chance to meet them. And these are two, that that was the case. And so I got to hear him speak, I got to actually meet him. And it was like, "Oh my gosh," I go home to my wife, you won't believe who I met. And so to actually be able to do an event with them, and to be able to have them share their experience and expertise is just phenomenal. So with that, I'm gonna really let them just rock it out. So Dr. Darlene Chambers take the lead.

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 05:24

Thank you so much for being here and spending time with two individuals. I've been so lucky to be in their presence. They're warriors. They're fighters for both civil rights and most importantly, kids. I'm dying to know, how about all of you? What attracted them to the charter idea? Maybe like me, the charter idea found me. I'm a have not kid that got a ticket, regardless of my zip code. And that ticket was education. Howard Fuller, my goodness, what attracted you to the chartering idea? You've been in it for a while, share that?

**D** Dr. Howard Fuller 06:14

Well, first of all, I just want to thank everybody for coming. And, you know, when people start talking about us the way he talks like, obituaries? [Laughter]

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 06:30

Howard, I just worship you, you're alive.

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 06:35

Yeah. Well, what attracted me was, I think, when I first heard about charter schools, I was a superintendent. I'd just been made the superintendent in Milwaukee. And in order to become the superintendent, they had to change the state law in Wisconsin, because I've never been a teacher or principal. And so they changed the state laws so that I could, you know, be, you know, become the superintendent. But prior to knowing about charters, I was a supporter of vouchers. I know, that's a horrible word for some of y'all. But too bad. So, so, so standing with Polly Williams, in 1988, and 1989, we were able to pass the first voucher bill, you know, in the United States, that wasn't about, I think it was Vermont and Maine. So they had vouchers, but it's because they didn't have high schools or something like that. But this allowed low income parents to access nonsectarian schools. And so when I heard about charters, I just saw it as another tool that people could use to choose. The difference being that the charter effort, didn't have an income specification, and was also about public schools, a new type of public schools. So what I saw was poor parents getting the ability through a voucher to access the private sector, charter schools, giving us an opportunity to create new types of schools within the public sector. So for me, it was an easy thing to support. Because even as a superintendent, what I realized, was that if you could not bring something more dynamic into the existing institution, it simply was not going to change based on his own volition, and its own kind of momentum. And so what I saw charters as was a tool that I could use as a superintendent, to bring innovation into the district, even as we tried to create new possibilities, particularly for poor people on the private school side.

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 08:59

Thank you. Joe, we've worked together, we've spent time together. You've been in this movement for 25 plus years, what attracted you to it? And what would you add to what Howard is saying?

D

Dr. Joe Nathan 09:14

So before I answer that, I just want make a comment about our hosts, thank you to the hosts. And thanks to each of you for coming. Some of you I've known for 35 to 40 years, literally, some of the people in the room I've never met before tonight, some of the people are people that I've gotten to know in the last couple of months. So I want to thank each of you for the enormous important work that you've done, for your openness. Alex Medler over here and I started off arguing passionately about research, and we ended up cooperating on arguably one of the first pieces of national research. I want to thank people in this room for their openness. And I want to thank the Institute, obviously for its willingness to make things happen. One of the central ideas of the charter, and the chartering movement, it seems to me is, you know, explanation and an affirmation of what Margaret Mead says, "Never doubt that a small group of people can change the world, indeed, it's, it's the only thing that ever has." And the story that a

lot of you have heard about five people sitting around a table is true and writing down things on a napkin. That's true. But I think it's important to go back a little bit, and I can spend an hour on this and won't. But I want to say a couple of quick things about the idea of chartering as opposed to the individual schools, because I think chartering is the idea that groups of people will be allowed to create new public schools. And it's a fundamental, it's based on three fundamental principles. First, in America, we say people are allowed to do something different, number one, to carry out their dreams and their ideas and their principles, they're allowed to do something, number one, number one, as long as they're willing to be responsible for results. That's number two. And number three, that people are allowed to do this within some limits. And we created when the original bill was written, which I actually have a copy of right here, you're welcome to take a look at it. And if somebody I've had a lot of people ask for it, if you send me a stamped, self addressed envelope, I'll send you a copy. But the chartering idea was that there were going to be some limits, just as there's a limit on freedom of speech, and so on, and so on. So I think it's those fundamental principles, opportunity to dream, to carry out your dreams, carry out your ideas, as long as you're willing to be responsible for the results. And recognizing that you can't do anything. I mean, you can't say no, we're only going to accept those people, you know, like, huh, Stuyvesant does that we're only gonna accept those people. Had this real interesting conversation with Diane Ravitch over the last seven years. Tell me about which is more equitable, a charter that's open to all or Stuyvesant or a whole bunch of those schools? Of course, you know, the answer that she gives to that, that's okay. But in any case, it was those three principles. Then just a brief word about the history. I was involved in the southern Civil Rights Movement. I grew up in Wichita, and I remember a lot of things about that and was... more to say about that later. But when I went to college, I remember in 1968, reading this incredible article, which the Institute has been nice enough to put in your documents. And when people start talking about Al Shanker and Ted Kolderie, and Ember Reichgott Junge and others, they did and we did things I think are important. But I really want to encourage you to take a look at the material that's in your packet on the left hand side from, from Kenneth Clark from 1968, where he talks about alternative public schools. And he says 1968, that it is time, it is past time to create new kinds of public schools outside the control of local school districts. Now, if you want to see a founding document of one of the central principles of chartering, then that's one of the founding documents and it goes way before some of us wrote books, or some of us wrote essays. And I think it's really important to understand. So it was this principle that we ought to those three principles that I mentioned, plus this article that I read in college, that Howard, that Howard reminded me of some years later. That's an astonishing piece of work from as many of you know, the guy, Kenneth Clark, who with Mrs. Clark, came up with the idea of the Doll Test, which was, of course, the basis for the Brown versus Board. So I would say it was those principles that helped lead to this idea, we're going to have to have a new approach to public education, which is chartering, which really empowers educators and community groups, but also gives families options.

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 13:55

There's a word we hear a lot in education. I think it's a good word. But I think it's a word we need to stare at a bit. Did you say the skinny little document was the law? I, it might be less than 10 pages. Have you seen any charter law less than 100 to 200 pages lately? How did we get from the original document and y'all can see that it's pretty thin and very short. To accountability, accountability, accountability. We all know that there's a balance. So what's happened, Howard, between the 10 page legislation and the kind of accountability that we're requiring today, and the laws that are called maybe the model law that's well over 100 pages.

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 14:52

Well since Joe, like, helped Ember and all those to put the first time but I'd like to hear his answer.

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 14:59

All right, you get to the side. Oh, by the way, when you're moderating Howard and and Joe, you just kind of hand it to them. So Joe, you go first. Thank you Howard.

D

Dr. Joe Nathan 15:09

Well, this is intended as a conversation. So I hope that for example, Ember and others who helped, helped make this happen, will will add their comments. But one of the central things that we wanted to do was to try to provide opportunity and justice, which is very, very important word for I think, virtually everyone, perhaps everyone is, we really wanted to provide justice. It has never been the case in this country, that there hasn't been a school choice. There's always been school choice for wealthy people and, like Diane Ravitch, and so the question was not would there be choice in the country, there would be choice for wealthy people, including wealthy people who could move to affluent suburbs. We want to provide greater opportunity and justice, not precisely the same opportunities, but certainly expanded opportunities. So one of the principles in operation was justice. A second principle that was really important here was to not over regulate. I had spent 14 years as an inner city district public school teacher and administrator and helped to start an innovative K through 12 public school, which got some awards from the federal government and other places, but was being regulated to death. Now, a version of that school is actually still around in the St. Paul Public Schools. Um, but it's, it's had 17 different principles. That's PALS principles, and many of whom really opposed the ideas of the school. So Al Shankar talked about in 1988, when he heard about the Ray Budde idea, which was really not chartering. But he talked about how people who tried to create innovative schools within school districts retreat, here's a direct quote from Shankar, "Like traders or outlaws if they dared to move outside the lockstep." And if they somehow created some kind of new option, and he was looking in it, what happened to innovative teachers in New York and Detroit, and Cincinnati, and Chicago, if they somehow managed to create new options, here's the rest of the quote, "...they could look forward to insecurity, obscurity and outright hostility." There's something fundamentally wrong with the reaction when you're treating innovators, who are trying to do the best thing for at least some kids treating them like that. And so part of the idea was not just opportunity for families, but opportunity for educators and this gets lost. Chartering is really an important opportunity for educators and communities. So part of the idea was that we wanted to expand opportunity for educators. And that's right here in the introduction. The third thing we wanted to do is to be careful about over regulation. You can under regulate, but you can also over regulate, and we may get into a broader discussion, but we really wanted to try to lay out certain principles. One other point that I wanted to make about looking back, we did really try to understand the previous history of American education. If you haven't seen it, I'd encourage you to take a look at the Ford Foundation report, 'A Foundation Goes to School', which is how they spent \$30 million and essentially, nothing was left after five years. Nothing was left pretty much after five years and \$30 million. And that was 30 years ago. So we saw some of the lessons of the Ford

Foundation. But we also had looked at the GI Bill. And we knew that there had been some abuses in the GI Bill, it did a lot of wonderful things. But there also been some real messes. So we introduced the concept in the original bill of an authorizer, who would have the responsibility to take a look at the proposal. And just because somebody wanted to create a new school did not mean that they would have the right to do so. And the original bill included the provision of authorizing. There are a lot of myths that have been created about oh, we weren't very specific about that. There's some provisions about authorizing. We recognize that just because people wanted to create a new school did not mean that they had the skills, the qualifications to do so. So those are some of the things that went into this, but we wanted to make sure, we wanted to try at least to provide opportunity and justice without overregulation, and we hope to build in some regulation to make to recognize that there are some thieves, charlatans and fools and just because somebody wants to do something doesn't mean they have the skills to do it.

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 19:30

Howard, Secretary DeVos said today, you know, the original idea was to give freedom and innovation for showing measurement and showing outcomes. But she lamented and I think what she said we've drawn lines and we've become the man and I think what she meant by that perhaps was we are now tipping perhaps into that regulation area, potentially a little too much. Howard, what are your thoughts with what Howard said, and then Secretary DeVos, challenging all of us in the choice sector, to be careful about drawing too many lines, thoughts?

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 20:16

I think, a couple of things, number one, in some ways, it's much easier to fight a revolution than it is to govern. And so what happens is like, when you are out there fighting, you have like a very simple thing, I'm trying to get rid of whatever this is I'm fighting against and replace it, presumably with something that is better, then what happens is the something that's better actually gets passed. And then the people who are going to govern take it over. And what has happened, I think, in the charter world, is a couple of things. And I have to use the voucher thing, just as a point of reference. When the voucher bill was passed in Milwaukee, the AFT, I think it was I don't think it was any, I think it was AFT, put on your website, there are a couple of different ways to deal with this. The first thing is you always try to make sure that the laws never get passed. But if they're gonna get passed, you fight every single moment to weaken it, you put caps on it, you limit the amount of money, you do all of these things. And then if it still gets through, what you then do, and this is what they put on their website is, you you, you regulate it, to death. So for example, there was constant law, the two things is one of the two things that made it constitutional was that there was not excessive government entanglement. And those judges felt that there was enough, quote, accountability, so that the citizens rights would be protected. But the AFT envisioned very clearly was, if we go in an oath and put more regulation, we can actually take them back to court on excessive government entitlement. Because not what we've done is entangled the government and so so there's a relentless pressure to put regulation on, one to try to stifle what it is that you're trying to do. But the second thing comes from a less negative perspective. And it's more like when I was superintendent for example, as you all know, every day something happens in a classroom somewhere. And what would happen is board members would hear about it. And they would pass a regulation to protect every other classroom from this ever happening, when in fact, if

they just would have dealt with that one issue, all of this regulation that they piled on top of it wasn't necessary. But then if you're a school board member or a legislator, if you don't pass stuff, why are you there? So one of the things that happens is you got enemies, trying to overregulate it, to stifle it, you got good people with good things in mind, who want to try to make sure that we put everything in it, that will stop anything terrible from ever happening. And then a new person comes in and says, this is pretty good, but we need more. And then we got those of us in the charter movement who are so like, we got to prove to the public that we're public. And the way to prove to the public that we're public, is to take all the stuff that we had run from, and put that in our bill. So no one could say that we're not public. So all of a sudden, a great idea becomes institutionalized to the max, the opponents are happy, because they know we got us all entangled. Those of us in the movement who think, "My God, we have proven to the public that we're public," that we're happy, because we can now stand up and say, "We're public." The only people that are not happy, are the kids who were supposed to be doing all of this for, the teachers and people who thought I was gonna be able to go over and do something innovative. And now they find out that my ability to innovate is being curtailed by the same amount of regulation that led us to try to create the charter bill. So you know what, I think we got to do, that Ember and y'all need to get back on the napkin. And in the light of what has occurred, write the next model. And the next model is to, is to do the same thing that we did with the old model, and that is to try to get away from the model that we have now accepted. And then the last thing that I would say, and I see Tony, and Jack and Dan and people in here. The other thing that we've done, you know, and I don't think we intended to do this, we've set up these accountability measures in ways that we can no longer serve all of the kids. And if we become so heavily invested in a test first accountability structure, that people who want to serve kids, who will never fit that model can't get into the charter school sector. And so I think we have a, we have a lot to be proud of. But we have a lot to work on. And I'm waiting for the next group of young revolutionaries. And they can be old too, as long as you got revolutionary thought, to press us on radically changing where we currently are. Because if we don't get that pressure, all we're going to do is have two calcified systems, the traditional system, and this new calcified charter system, both of them stifling the effort to educate all of the children.

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 26:09

We did mean this to be a give and take with the audience. And is there anyone that would like to ask a question or even make a statement, Eric? Well, have you noticed

E

Eric Premack 26:24

Do we need a microphone?

J

Jim Goenner, Ph.D. 26:25

We do. You're gonna be recorded for history.

E

Eric Premack 26:29

I got a phone call the other day from a obscenely rich guy who wants to start a charter school

I got a phone call the other day from a obscurely rich guy who wants to start a charter school. It would be sort of a science, technology, math...

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 26:42  
STEM, STEM.

**E** Eric Premack 26:43  
STEM. And he wants to do it in a urban area. He wants it to target disadvantaged kids. But he said, I've got partnerships with some engineering schools, can I make sure that the kids who are coming in are able to do, coming out of you know, eighth grade coming into my ninth grade, will be able, you know, would be willing to be on a very intense, rigorous track that will allow them to ultimately succeed in these top level engineering colleges.

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 27:22  
That might be called selective admission.

**E** Eric Premack 27:25  
Certainly is that and I've, it's something that I have kind of stirred over in my sleep over and interested in both of your take on it.

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 27:37  
So criteria for a specific design, a specific model. And the way that Eric Premack put it, is it sounded like it might be good intent, so that you could have success, potentially, from the beginning. What do you think about a model and admissions process and getting students into a successful match?

**D** Dr. Howard Fuller 28:03  
Well, first of all, I didn't hear that there was an admissions criteria.

**E** Eric Premack 28:08  
they would have to come out of eighth grade with, you know, high enough test scores or whatever, that they would be able to succeed and are very rigorous pre engineering curriculum.

**D** Dr. Howard Fuller 28:19

Dr. Howard Fuller 28:19

Oh, you mean, like the selective traditional public schools?

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 28:22

Magnet magnet? Perhaps?

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 28:25

I'm just trying to make a point here.

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 28:26

Oh, you're saying traditional district could be...

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 28:31

I mean, you hear all of this stuff about charter schools, pick kids, hey man the traditional system, got all kinds of schools that have selective admission criteria. And because we don't know nothing, we nod our heads, "Oh, yeah, that's true." So what I would say is this, is that I personally, am not for selective public schools. I believe that if you're a public school, you should serve all kids. And if you open up a school, like what this dude is talking about, then what you need to do is to make sure that you have a support structure, and he got all this money, have a support structure, so that kids can come into that school who may not be prepared at that moment in time, but with the right kind of support and help, they can become prepared. I worry about any type of public school that has a selective criteria on the front end. That's just just me, because because I think that's anti public. It's just sort of how I see it. But I thought that when I was the superintendent, we have one school in the district for the college bound. And I always used to ask myself, what happens to the parents if they don't get their kids in this one school that we set up for the college bound, but they would like their kids to go to college, but they didn't get in that school. How do you do that in a public school system. So I would say the same thing about this.

D

Dr. Joe Nathan 30:03

Eric, and I think probably a number of us from time to time have calls like this, I'd refer this gentleman to Barnett Helzberg, former CEO of Helzberg Diamonds, who's a similar in a similar situation, and 10 years ago decided to create a charter, which has had an absolutely fabulous record in Kansas City of helping low income kids, predominantly kids of color, go on to do extraordinary things. And we talked about this issue, and I said, it's inconsistent with the charter idea. He said, all right, well, let's give it a shot. And that, and the school is open to all. And they've had kids from very challenging backgrounds, who have done extraordinary things. I think one of the central principles, P. L. E. S., of the charter idea is that the schools ought to be open to all kinds of kids. And frankly, in some of the early days of the charter movement, this was one of the reasons that some legislators on the political left as well as politically on the

political left, were willing to go with this idea, because they said, "I really liked this idea that these schools are going to be open to all kinds of kids." And as you know, in Minnesota, we combined it with a law we already had, which allowed kids to move across district lines. So we can literally have kids moving from one district to another, both to go to traditional district schools, as well as to charter public schools. And I think this principle P. L. E. is really fundamental to the charter idea. So I would encourage, I should I'm sorry, I didn't mean to say he, I would encourage, because it might be a she, but I would encourage this person to check with Barnett and others. I'm sure we could, other people could suggest you you may already have other examples in in California, where people have said, we're going to create these kinds of schools, do a number of the things that Howard said, and many graduates will do fantastic things.

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 32:04

You know Eric, to add on this. See, I think there's a larger issue that your question touches on, and I'd like to take a minute to frame it. If you want to know anything at all about the history of black education, then you must read Jim Anderson's book, 'The History of Education in the South: 1876 to 1935.' I always get the dates wrong. But Jim Anderson's book, one thing that Jim points out very clearly, and a lot of people don't know, is that when when black people came out of slavery, we had a very clear understanding about the connection between liberation, education, and freedom. And our realization was being liberated didn't make you free. It created the conditions for you to pursue freedom. And therefore education was like a critical thing to us. Poor white people bought into the white supremacist notion that y'all don't need to be educated because us rich white people goin' and take care of ya'll. Black people didn't buy into that. But we came out knowing that we needed to create educational institutions, but we didn't have the wherewithal to create those institutions. Two groups of white people descended upon us, the missionaries, and the industrialists. And each one of them had their own view about what kind of education we needed. So the missionaries were saying, "We got to educate black people so that they can become citizens." The industrialist was saying, "We got to create the type of education that will keep these people subordinate, but able to follow orders to do what needs to be done." What both people didn't deal with was that we wanted help. But we did not want to be controlled. If you look at Ed. reform, two groups of white people have descended on black. And I don't mean this in a way that it sounds because it sounds like negative and it is at one level, but at another level it's not. But what I'm saying is, who who are, who are the current day missionaries, and who are the current day industrialists? Who have descended into our communities with a notion of 'these are the kinds of schools you people need.' And even though some of them are successful, it begs the question of empowerment. It begs the question of freedom for our people is also largely dependent on their ability to establish institutions that they control. And so, so a part of what the next generation of charter people are going to have to deal with is how do we help without controlling? How do we listen? How do we hear what these people are saying? And why is it that people, we're helping them mad at us? And so I'm just going to say, Eric, to me your question touches on that larger framework, that I think the next generations of people who are going to take this effort, wherever it's gonna go, that's going to be a primary issue, that we've got the get right, because we have not gotten to the right so far.

D

Dr. Joe Nathan 35:40

I want to pick up on that.

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 35:43

Go ahead Joe, thank you.

D

Dr. Joe Nathan 35:45

So there, there's a person in this room, and I'm gonna identify him in a minute, who is the director of an extraordinary school in St. Paul, that was founded by a young man I began working with about 35 years ago. He was a very angry young man, about 16, who came to the innovative alternative school that I was working in, because he had slugged a teacher, which he really had done. And the teacher had knocked a hat off his head, because there was a rule in the school, you couldn't wear a hat. Kid was walking down the hall, teacher told him to take the hat off his head, he refused. Teacher told him, he better take his hat off, or whatever. kid said some things to the teacher. And so the teacher walked up to the young man knocked the hat off his head and young man knocks the teacher on the floor, and is a very angry young man. And he came to the school where we, where I worked, and we got him involved in a project where young people solved problems that were real in the world having to do with consumer problems, or environmental harms or other problems. And one of the ideas that I hope a lot of schools, whether they're district or charter, private or parochial are using, is this idea of we got to empower young people to see how they can not only read about all those great people in the past, we got to help them understand how they can make a difference in the world today. Anyway, he got involved in this class, and he learned how he could do that. And we had a problem where young people were, had been told that there was a problem with a car agency that was ripping off somebody and or allegedly ripping off somebody. And some of the kids said, "Well, we ought to write a letter to the Better Business Bureau or we ought to write a letter to the TV station." And he said, "No, I think we ought to write the problem down, wrap it around a brick and throw it through their window, that will get their attention." Well it would have gotten their attention. But I think it would have produced some other things that wouldn't have been so pleasant. Anyway, this young man learned gradually to use his rage and his anger and his frustration, in more positive ways. Local newspaper came to this school, took a picture of he and some other people, including me and put it in the paper. He came to me a few weeks later, and he said, "You know, I often thought I might have my name in the paper. And I even thought I might have my picture in the paper. But I never thought it would be for something good." Now that young man graduated, went to work for Prince, was a fabulous producer with Prince won a gold or platinum record. I don't remember which what. And but he and Prince didn't always agree. So he set up a recording art studio, some young people came to him and and wanted to record their music. He said, "Well, I'll help you", because they couldn't read the contracts that he wanted them to sign. So he set up a tutoring service and again, long story short, ultimately opened the High School for Recording Arts, which is a charter in St. Paul, where young people have become so sophisticated about the creation of Youtube videos and other public service announcements, that they've been hired, not contribute contribute contributions to places like State Farm Insurance, or Verizon, been hired to create YouTube videos. And I encourage you to do a Google search of High School for Recording Arts and think about contracting with them and or exporting that idea, bringing in that idea of some of these young people. Now the reason that I tell the story in response to the point that Howard just made is that that young man would never have been allowed never have been allowed to create a school, an innovative school in a traditional district. Doesn't have a college degree,

much less, you know, administrative certification. The movement must, in my opinion, be open to a variety of people who have experiences that can help transform the lives of young people and Tony is in the room. I think right there. If you want more information about the school, would you hold up your hand. [Applause] But my point my point is that we have tried and some cases succeeded and some cases failed in making this idea, an idea that will allow a lot more people into this discussion than the traditional means. And one of the things that Howard and Deborah McGriff and others have done is to relentlessly for 25 years say, "We need to make sure there are a variety of people who are having positions of leadership." And I completely agree, among, African American, American Indian, and so on. So I think it's really, really critical that we push back on some of the regulation, I was really pleased to hear Secretary DeVos talk about that, I was really pleased to hear Jeanne Allen be talking about this, I think we really have to challenge a lot of the reregulation that has happened, which is not to say we shouldn't have some, because there are some fools and there's some charlatans, and there's some crooks, so we need some. But I think we have gone way past the amount of regulation that we need. And I think that's one of the tasks along with the whole issue of making sure that there are a lot of people who are having these opportunities, not just people who have access to frankly, those of us who were white males with a whole lot of privilege.

**D** Dr. Howard Fuller 41:19

Gotta make sure they know Tony and TC.

**D** Dr. Joe Nathan 41:22

I'm sorry, I didn't clarify, Tony is the director and TC is the founder, and what's his official title? Founder. Okay, and he works. He's one of the one he works there. He's part of the staff.

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 41:37

So is there anything you'd like to follow up with our speakers or even talk to the audience about the dream that was brought forward? And it's the reason I'm in the movement. Is those types of dreams. Anything you'd like to say to the audience?

**T** Tony Simmons 41:54

Well, first, I just want to thank Joe and Howard. These are two men who continue to give back and reach out. You know, as, as a leader of a single site school, it's easy to be forgotten. Especially when you're up against tremendous odds and a big system. Whenever I've called either of them, they've been quick to support and backup everything that they're saying there in terms of recognizing the work that we're doing to empower young people who are normally just marginalized and oppressed. So I just want to thank you first. My question, though, we're, we're in Washington, DC 2017. And, and I just want to acknowledge this time. Since I was introduced to the charter sector in 2001, I recognized that there was a kind of political divide. I didn't understand it, because I, you know, intrinsically, I wasn't, I wasn't a formal educator, I was introduced to it through my work and entertainment industry and Joe's story. But you could see even back then, you know, for some reason, seemed like more Republicans were in

support, and more Democrats were against it. So then I found out why that was over time. And and that was that those lines were always blurred, but then this hyper partisan environment, as we think about the sector, what do you suggest we need to do to combat that? And to help people on both sides of the aisle recognize that this is a important cause that should go beyond politics? Or maybe it's just not capable of? In these times.

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 43:56

If anyone would like to. Thank you for your question. So get it out of politics and perhaps...

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 44:05

But that's not possible.

J

Jim Goenner, Ph.D. 44:07

Now, we're talking real.

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 44:08

But that's not possible. Like, here's my thing, man. I tried to say this on the panel I was on the other day, the thing that most worries me is that some of us in this room have allowed somebody like Donald Trump, to divide us. And I want to be really clear. Like I sent out a tweet saying that black people have been fighting for parent choice long before Trump was even born. And my hashtag was 'it ain't about him'. And it ain't about him. And for those of you who mad at him, hell, I'm mad at him, but we can't let him divide us. They are some of us in here like, support him or what or like Betsy, I Like Betsy, but there's a difference between Betsy as a human being, who I, who I respect, and the policies that these folks come out with. And the one thing that we have to be very clear is we're not going to allow this administration or any administration, to pit one group of poor people against another. I'm a strong supporter of parents choice, but never at the expense of Title One, never at the expense of other programs that have been designed to help poor people. The idea for choice is to give poor people more levers not less. And if we need to be clear, to this administration, anybody else that we stand together to say that low income and working class and moderate income parents ought to have choice, however, you see that, but not at the expense of their need for health care. Their needs to have housing, their need to have jobs, we got these people out here, man, hey, man, I support charters. But I'm against the minimum wage. You know, I think these people ought to be, you know, deported, on and on and on. But we're supposed to be happy because you support charter schools, or we're gonna put more money in the pot for charter schools, but we don't take that money from other pots that poor people need. We have to stand against that. And you don't stand against that by joining with Randy. You do. By us being a coordinated and collective voice of those of us in this room that support charters, that support parent choice, saying very clearly, that that support is not a basis for you all just destroying everything else that helps poor people. And we have to say that with a very clear voice. And if it means that the charter fund don't get no more money then the charter fund, don't get no more money, but never at the expense of everything else. Now, I know some people don't agree with that. But

that's what I think we have to do. If we're serious, right? If we're really serious, because look, man, this is the last thing I'll say, to me, people asked me, "Well, are you a supporter of charter schools?" I'm a supporter of chartering. I'm a supporter of the the process. I'm a supporter of the reason why we got into this in the first place. So for me, the issue is, whenever you no longer get committed to purpose, and you get committed to the arrangement that gets you the purpose that puts you on the road of being a protector of the status quo. And so the chartering stuff and the schools and all this. It's not about schools, per se. It's about what Paulo Freire said in 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed', the objective of education, is to prepare young people, so they can engage in the practice of freedom, the transformation of their world, right? So it isn't just about whether or not we can come up with the right technology and all of this, it is does whatever it is we do, does it give these young people the tools that they need to engage in the practice of freedom, hard to engage in the practice of freedom if you don't have health care. You hungry. You don't have a place to stay. So if we're not clear about that, then we're in this room for the wrong reasons.

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 48:56  
Thank you Howard. Joe, do you have anything to add?

**D** Dr. Joe Nathan 49:04  
I think one of the stupidest things I never tried to do is to try to follow that.

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 49:09  
It's pretty good huh.

**D** Dr. Joe Nathan 49:12  
For what it's worth, we're going to the Capitol tomorrow together to have a conversation with the Chief of Staff of one one of the most powerful members of Congress. And we're going to make that point. And I guess one of the questions that I hope you're considering is what are you gonna do with the state legislators? I hope each of you knows the state legislators in your community and is actively working with state legislators because the chartering idea, clearly, is first and foremost, a state initiative, not a federal initiative. So I hope, that kind of passion and eloquence although none of us can, or at least, I can't, I won't speak for you all, but I can't match that which is why we're going together.

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 50:00  
Can I come?

**D** Dr. Joe Nathan 50:01

But the question for you all in part is what are you going to do now, given the efforts that are clearly being made very, very well funded efforts to present people like us, as part of the effort to do all these terrible things. So we have to respond, we have to constructively, and we're gonna go partake in that tomorrow. But I'm also going to be going going to see one of the senators from Minnesota, who is a charter supporter and is furious about some of this other stuff. And you may have seen that person questioning the secretary when she was being confirmed. And but it's not just about what I'm going to do what Howard, it's what are we going to do? And I completely agree, which is why earlier today, in another meeting, I applauded the National Alliance, which issued a very sophisticated and thoughtful I thought, and strong comment saying, and some of you in this room know, I've not always agreed with Alliance don't always agree with them now. But I did think that the statement that Nina and the Alliance issued about, yes, we're glad there's more money over here. But this is going to really mess things up for districts and charters. And we and we are very deeply and strongly opposed. I think that's a really good approach, although obviously doesn't match the eloquence, passion and so on that you just heard from Howard.

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 51:32

But you know, the thing is that we also have to be prepared that we can be eloquent or whatever, and it won't matter. And so people say, "Well, why would you do it then? And so Derrick Bell, you know, Derrick Bell, you know, wrote this book of 'Faces At The Bottom Of The Well'. And what he's talking about in his book was that racism is like, permanent, right? And that it's not some just tangential thing about American society, it's like permanent. So people will raise the question, is it well, if racism is permanent, then then why fight. And what he said, that is so critical to me is that, "You have to fight, even when victory is not possible. Because not to fight is the cosine on the injustice." And so, you know, we have to raise our voice at this time even if you say, "Yeah, but but my voice is not gonna change." But if we don't hear your voice, then they're able to say, "This is okay." And this ain't okay. And we have to raise our collective voices. Because otherwise, it is to say that stuff that we know is not just that it's okay. And we can't be recorded in history as being silent at this particular moment in time.

D

Dr. Joe Nathan 52:59

One of the sources of inspiration for some of us is Langston Hughes, and many of you are familiar with a wonderful poem, 'Mother to Son.' And earlier today, I discovered that Viola Davis is reading that. So we have that queued up. I don't know you all. Are you ready to play that? You know what I'm talking about? Yes, no?

J

Jim Goenner, Ph.D. 53:22

I mean, we were set to play it at the end. But if you can roll the tape, we'll go.

D

Dr. Joe Nathan 53:26

Yeah, I mean, it's a reminder while you're getting it ready, it's a reminder that you never quite know what you're what impact you will have. But just because it's raw, doesn't mean, you can back off.

V

Viola Davis 53:41

"Well, son, I'll tell you: Life for me ain't been no crystal stair. It's had tacks in it, and splinters and boards torn up. And places with no carpet on the floor, bare. But all the time I've been a-climbin' on, And reachin' landin's, And turnin' corners, And sometimes goin' in the dark Where there ain't been no light. So boy, don't you turn back. Don't you set down on the steps 'Cause you finds it's kinder hard. Don't you fall now" For I've still goin', honey, I've still climbin', And life for me ain't been no crystal stair."

D

Dr. Joe Nathan 54:27

One very brief other comment about that. I'm just finishing... Okay, let's cut it that that is the YouTube video, by the way. And thank you for playing that also has Langston Hughes reading that remarkable poem. That poem has special significance to me because when I was 15 years old, I was marching in Wichita, Kansas. Many of you know that Brown versus Board was Topeka Kansas was marching and people were throwing bricks and other things at us. It was not clear whether the police were going to restrain folks and I was really scared. And an older African American woman put her arms around me and said, "Young man, you look pretty scared." And I said, "Yes, ma'am." And then she proceeded to put her arm around me and to recite that poem as we walked. So it has a lot of significance. And I've been reading about a new biography of Rosa Parks, that talks about the decade that she had spent working on issues in Montgomery, it didn't just occur to her one day, and how frustrated she become, but she kept going on. And I think that's one of the central lessons of all of this. We've just got to keep going on learning from each other, working with each other. But we got to keep going on.

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 55:48

You had a question down front? Jim, I'm not sure where you are.

J

Jim Goenner, Ph.D. 55:53

So I want to pull host privileges for one minute. Many people think of some of the things that you guys say. Is it an age thing? Is it a courage thing? Is that don't have a formal organization thing? What is it that allows you to speak with such voice, such passion, such courage?

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 56:21

For me, like I owe a debt to my mother, and to my grandmother, and to all the Big Mama's and all of them not not not, not the ones that are talked about in the history books. But the ones who made all of these sacrifices to get us to this point. And I have no right not to speak. Because to accept, what is happening is a betrayal of my people, it's a betrayal. Let me explain

it this way. I hear people talk about how this education reform stuff we're doing today. Is the civil rights movement of our time. This is the most comfortable ass movement that I have. I'm sorry, to say...

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 57:28

Yes, you did, you did say that Howard. So thank you for saying that.

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 57:36

You got to forgive me. But but but, you know, but this, I mean, that we're not sleeping on floors in Mississippi man. We're not being shot at, we're not being put in jail. Well, look at this. Look how we all sit up in here, you know, and what I'm saying is, with all of this comfort, not to speak truth at this moment. Is sacrilegious man. I mean, I mean, we can gotta speak. And if we care about all of these kids that we're supposed to be in here for, how can we not speak? You know, like, Howard Thurman wrote this book, 'Jesus and the Disinherited'. And he talked about the kids who come from the families of the disinherited. And he talked about their lives as being hard lives. Don't we have a responsibility to speak on it to to not let their lives get lost in the conversation about technology, new curriculum, new ways to approach kids without talking about the lives of these children, and the pain that these children and these families are suffering today. So you know, Jim, whenever I get an opportunity to speak, I am required to speak on this stuff.

D

Dr. Joe Nathan 59:19

Well, since you mentioned Jesus. No, I mean, I know I don't want to be flippant. I mean, that was that was a beautiful statement. In our tradition, we're told justice, justice shall you pursue. I was trained by a guy named Saul Alinsky. I was informed and aided by the African American woman named Viola, Viola Brown in Wichita, Kansas, who put her arm around me. I think that we must, in each our own ways, find ways to work for justice, and there will be consequences. I mean, some of us have have been told "No way, you know, you're too passionate, or no, you're not this or you're not that." I mean, there are consequences. There are I mean, there are nice things that happen. I want to again, thank the Institute for being willing to host this tonight. It's beautiful place. I'm walking down that alley, last night, that's the most beautiful alley I ever saw. And I think that each of us have to come to terms with how are we going to spend our lives and some of you know that about two years ago, I had a heart attack. And that if I had not gotten to the hospital, when I did with four different systems working beautifully together, the health partners in the ambulance, whatever, whatever. If I had, if I had not got to the, if I'd gotten there, 15 minutes later, I'd be dead. So one of the things that I do every day, is to think about if today is my last day on earth, what am I going to do? What how am I going to have the 24 hours, I've got, what, five minutes or 10 minutes, or sometimes it's a couple hours, but every single day, I try to think what am I gonna do today for at least a few minutes if today is my last day on earth. It's a five minute test, I encourage you to think about it. We never know when we're going to go, we're all going to go. So the question becomes, how are we going to spend this time and frankly, everybody in this room has been given a vast array of opportunities. So the question really is how are we going to use the time, the opportunity the resources, the privilege that we have been given? And you know, for a whole lot of us it is you

got to speak out, you drop you gotta try to develop new coalition's, you gotta try to make a difference. Never quite know. I mean, I gotta tell you, I've had a whole lot of journalists call me and say, did you ever know that when you wrote when you helped write this bill, that all this was gonna happen? Hell no. We had no idea. But you've gotta, in my opinion, you've gotta make use of the opportunities and the resources and energy and the creative, whatever you have, plus the people with whom you can work to make a difference because it is so clearly outrageous. What is happening in this country. And if you're not outraged, as somebody said, "You don't understand what's going on."

**D** Dr. Howard Fuller 1:02:48

You know, doing the last thing on that is that, you know, Frantz Fanon wrote this book called, 'Wretched of the Earth'. And in this book, like the final paragraph or something, it ends by saying, "Every generation of relative obscurity must discover its mission and either fulfill it or betray it." That has always stuck with me.

**J** Jim Goenner, Ph.D. 1:03:11

I almost feel like we should end right there. But I have a special guest, fellow traveler. Now she's a little shy, a little timid. But she wants to ask a question, Jeanne Allen.

**D** Dr. Howard Fuller 1:03:26

Oh, my God.

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 1:03:27

Good to have you Jeanne.

**J** Jeanne Allen 1:03:30

So hi, guys. I love hearing you as you know. And I have to say you're talking about Viola Davis, who just recited that amazing poem. And she was a woman who, as you both know, starred in a movie a few years ago that we help with called, 'Won't Back Down.' And even though she didn't come from a perspective of school choice, she took that journey to put this movie in front of a lot of people that's still not necessarily well seen about the challenge that people have. And she did something that you both have done for a really long time that I implore you to talk a little bit about before we end and thank you, Jim, who's just an awesome leader in his own regard, which is you always say, Howard you most recently at the North Carolina Charter Conference, Joe, you on a daily basis, that we still have to say those things that we don't agree with with one another, we might fight each other on. But at the end of the day, those things we come together on, we have to stay together on. So whether it's an approach to schooling, whether it is a political viewpoint, can you talk a little bit about why it's important that we at least start at that point, those rooms that we were in 25 years ago that looked very different than they do today? None of us ever thought we'd be in rooms, strange bedfellows at Sarah's beach house

and Joe's like apartment in Minnesota. It was kind of weird, okay for a lot of us who felt very uncomfortable. So now that we've gotten all this other stuff out, talk about how we come together, please.

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 1:05:11

I want to I want to respond in two ways Jeanne and I don't know if either response is adequate to the question that you're asking. Many of you all who know me know that I believe in a concept called interest convergence theory. And Derrick Bell wrote this book called, 'Silent Covenants.' And he talked about this theory. And essentially what he said, you know, the to make brief is, he was talking about how black people were able to make progress in the civil rights movement. And there were two things, one is our own struggle. But the second is that at the point in time, when we were doing that the United States was trying to convince the rest of the world that democracy was a better form of government than communism, hard to do that with Bull Connor sicking dogs on people. So at a certain point in time, they put in a call to Bull and said, "Hey, man, you gotta quit sicking dogs on people. Because you're, you're messing up a larger thing that we got going here." And so at that moment, in time, our interests converge with the inches of the white rulers of this country, not because we were in fundamental agreement, it was because our interests converge, that there was there was, there was a, we have a need for each other at that moment in time. And what I say to all young social justice fighters, is that if you cannot live in a sea of contradictions, then you cannot fight for social justice in this country. And if you're, if you're not able to deal with these problems of interest convergence, you can't fight long term for social justice in this country. But the problem I have Jeanne, and it's the one that I have today, there are some limits to who you can be in a room with. Even if you agree on one thing, there are some people who are so despicable that their view on every other thing will stop me from being in the room with them, even though we agree on this one thing, because your level of despicability is so intense, that I can't be in the room with you. And yeah, I support parent choice. But if you goin' to be the face of parent choice, I can't be in this room with you. Because you are such a horrible human being on a whole bunch of other issues that are important to us. And that's, and I'm not talking about anybody particular about this.

D

Dr. Darlene Chambers 1:08:05

There's nobody in the room that he's talking about.

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 1:08:11

But Jeanne I'm trying to get you to see the struggle that I have, even though all of my life and you and I notice we've been in some rooms with some people that you just like, Oh my God. I mean, I remember the year we were trying to get the demonstration project for for for choice passed. And I was invited to speak to the Senate Republican lunch. And I rolled up in there, man, Strom Thurmond was in there. Jesse Helms is in there. And I'm like, "Man, I want to leap over the table and choke these dudes." Right? And, you know, grab onto the table. Howard, you gotta remember why you in here, man. You in here trying to get a vote from these people to support to support this demonstration project. But it was hard duty Jeanne. But the situation today surpasses that if you get my meaning. But having said all of that, there are people that

we must stay in the room together. We must, even though we don't you know we have some disagreements on some of these issues. We don't have fundamental disagreement on your humanity. I mean, not you but I mean, some of the folks who we don't agree with on a variety of political issues, but they're not despicable human beings. And it allows you to be in the room on the issues that you support. That's my view about this.

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 1:09:57  
Joe?

**D** Dr. Joe Nathan 1:09:58  
I don't think I can add anything to that. [Laughter]

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 1:10:02  
Jim, we had a question. And then we've got to be mindful of the time and wrap up.

**J** Jim Goenner, Ph.D. 1:10:08  
Finish line. Who's got the question?

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 1:10:10  
Right up front. Thank you for being so patient. You got some passionate people in this room.

**C** Chris Norwood 1:10:14  
It's all right. Sorry. My name is Chris Norwood. I'm from Florida. I'm the director of the Florida Association of Independent Public Schools. We are an association of independently operated charter schools. And my question is for Joe, and Mr. Fuller. You know, sometimes I often think, you know coming from, I'm originally from Newark, New Jersey. And so often I get dismayed that my community is not necessarily my community, broadly speaking, meaning the African American community are on a different side of this issue on a large scale. And I'm just wondering, you know, sometimes I wonder if, you know, people like yourselves are too early, or too late. You know, public education in this country was created by Black Reconstruction. Our history, the history of black people in this country is one of building black institutions once free, to educate the history of the historically black college speaks to that. And so I'm just curious as to today, you know, where we have the opportunity to create our own schools to receive public dollars in which to do that, whether is to others to the charter school, or whether through a voucher. I'm just curious as to why why is it that communities that need it the most are not, not in the front, not because of a lack of diversity I don't think. I think they're just not in this movement in a large scale. And I just want to take one quick one, when I was driving with my uncle, who grew up in rural Virginia is a medical doctor, and I was on the phone, talking to

some colleagues of mine, and he wasn't very aware with the work that I was doing. And he said, "Chris, you know, I didn't go to, my community didn't have a high school." I said, "What do you mean, you didn't have a high school? I know, you went to college, and I know you went to medical school." He said, "No, in my community, for a black person, you stopped going to school at eighth grade. There was no high school for black folk in my county in Virginia." I said, "Okay, well, what happened?" He said, "My churches, the churches in my county got together. And my grandmother worked another job and paid for me to go to a school that the churches in my community created." Now this must have been in the 1940s perhaps. I don't, I don't know. And so if you had the opportunity today, to pay for that education, through public vouchers, why wouldn't our community be the cheap people at the front line? And that problem of it's sort of, I always wonder that and given your leadership over the years, first of all, how do you deal with that reality?

D

Dr. Howard Fuller 1:13:09

Okay, so I have a couple of responses to that. First of all, I would suggest you, if you haven't seen, it's a book called 'The Color of School Reform.' And it's by a dude named Jeffrey Henig and a number of his colleagues. The point that they make in this book is that school districts are economic enterprises, as much as they are educational enterprises. And for a lot of black people, man, school districts have been the entree to the middle class. And so when you roll up in here talking about vouchers and charters, that you're talking about attacking a structure that has been a source of income for significant members of our community. And it isn't just the people who benefit by it, because people will go well, "How come these black preachers and stuff ain't out there you know, marching up?" Because do you know who's on a black preachers Deacon board? Do you? Do you have any idea who's in that black preacher's space on a day to day basis in his or her church? Who do you think, is the head of Jack and Jill, and all of these different things? They all got connections back to people who teach or are principals in school districts. So we got to be clear that people are torn because because the issues facing poor children, poor black children, brown children in this country are issues about race and class. And what we do is we look at it through the prism of race, and we don't understand the class dynamic. That is that is right there at the foundation of what some of our differences are. So that's one thing I want you to think about. The second thing is, I'm always intrigued when white people tell black people, "Y'all should get yourself together." First of all, black people don't think alike. We got different, like interests, we got different philosophical views. And the reality of it is that for some black people, they are philosophically opposed to what it is that we're talking about doing, even though you and I can make an argument that this is absurd for you to be opposed to this, given our history, you don't, because you went back to the 40s. I want to go back to what happened, as I said, when we came out of slavery, and what happened when the Missouri Compromise took place in 1877. And they restored power to the white planter class that ostensibly the Civil War was fought to get out of out of power. And one of the first things they did was to take the money out of the black schools that had been created because of the work of the Freedmen's Bureau, they then took that money, they gave it to white schools that we could not attend, they tax us to pay for those schools we couldn't attend. And then we had to tax ourselves to create schools so that our kids can learn. So for people who don't know nothing, to think that parent choice is some new phenomenon for black people is insane. But what is also true is that every point in time it was fought against by people who had certain interest in maintaining the systems as they currently exist. So it doesn't, I can't say, man, it doesn't bother me. But, but, but what I what I'm trying to do is to understand where this is coming from. And then for a lot of black parents, who are not single, single issue voters, what happens is we present someone to them, who supports charter schools, but as I said earlier,

opposed every other thing that would help them. Who do you think they're gonna vote for? So at a certain point in time, we got to start thinking through a, for lack of a better way to put it a different approach, or strategy. Because... And then I want to end by saying this. We have proven that if the right messenger, with the right message goes to certain black people, you can move them. A part of the problem is, when a lot of black people look at this, this movement, or whatever we're gonna call it that we've constructed what they see as a lot of white people. I'm just, I'm just saying, and at a certain point in time, there's gonna have to be more, they're gonna have to see more black people. Not just as like, junior partners, but as real partners in this in order for them to see a reason why they can be supportive. You know what I'm saying? So that's what I'm saying.

**D** Dr. Joe Nathan 1:18:19

No, I'm not gonna say anything after that.

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 1:18:28

We're, we're at the time. I don't know about all of you. I just want to keep hanging out with these gentlemen. How about all of you? They did a really, really good job.

**J** Jim Goenner, Ph.D. 1:18:39

We're gonna do a bonus question. This is like the encore right?

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 1:18:42

You know, it's fun reporting to Jim, because he goes, bonus question. There you go.

**J** Jim Goenner, Ph.D. 1:18:50

All right.

**U** Unnamed Speaker 1:18:55

I think it's more, not so much of a bonus question. But a thank you, I think the encouragement, hearing a lot of times when you can be get discouraged in this fight. I'm a minister in Brooklyn. I've tried several years to get a charter and was denied, had a private school, still have a private school, christian school for 30 years. The only reason why it's been able to stay open with the low tuition that we charge is because we're in the same building with the church. But knowing that there are children in our community that are gangbanging. Two weeks ago, a 15 year old, drove a stolen car and dragged the cop two blocks. Cop was fighting for his life in the hospital, and there's so many children in the community who 15 year old have 11 felonies before that incident. And so, there can be a lot of discouragement. So I want to thank both of you for speaking today because it gives encouragement that you know the word I got yesterday

is 'rejuvenate'. Your message today is to rejuvenate me that my heart is in the right place. And I must not give up the fight. Give up the fight, because there are folks who understand that there is a need for this. And even as a minister, I have board members who are UFT, or members of the congregation, but I dare to be different. Because people sacrificed their life not knowing who would benefit, people sacrificed in the south and all over for us to have an education not knowing if their generation of children from their lineage would actually benefit from that. But they did it anyway. And so I thank you, from the bottom of my heart tonight today, because you this meeting today has pushed me to lengths that you will never understand in this fight. So thank you.

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 1:20:59

Joe has a comment that you'd like to make. Thank you.

**D** Dr. Joe Nathan 1:21:08

Well, thank you for the comment. And thanks for the courage that you've displayed and are displaying. Many of you have seen the Apple Computer: 'Here's to the crazy ones.' I want to quote a little of that. Howard's talked about this is a pretty comfortable movement. But there are challenges and let let's be clear, people have lost jobs. People have lost a lot in this fight. And I want to be clear at I completely agree with what Howard said about pre comfortable and run respect, and all the details that he described, completely agree. But having said that, there have been consequences. So people who have worked on this, and people have lost jobs, and people have lost livelihoods and so on, and so on, and so on and so on. And that's not the same as being shot at in Mississippi. I agree. It's not the same, if but it there have been real consequences. But on balance, how many of us have ever been called crazy? Many of us. So what you know, Apple says, "Here's to the crazy ones, the misfits, the troublemakers, the round pegs in the square holes, the thing the people who see things differently." And then they go on to to say, "You can disabuse them, you can disagree with them, but you can't deny the fact that they change things. Because the people who are crazy enough to change the world are the ones who do and I want to end at least part of this by asking you to repeat that after me. I'll say it one more time. And we'll do it together. Because the I'll say it and then I asked you to say it together. Because the people who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world are the ones who do. Let's try that together. Because the other people who are crazy enough to think they can change things are the ones who do.

**D** Dr. Darlene Chambers 1:22:57

Thank you for coming and please come up and shake the hands of two men that are near and dear to my heart.

**J** Jim Goenner, Ph.D. 1:23:06

I got one final request. And that is to thank everybody, thank the Alliance for hosting the National Conference here in Washington DC. And we believe the greatest charter ever written is the United States Constitution. It's an idea it's the city on the hill. Howard, will you close this

out with your recitation of Frederick Douglass?

 Dr. Darlene Chambers 1:23:31

Would you do it? Please?

 Dr. Howard Fuller 1:23:38

If there is no struggle, there is no progress. And those of us who profess to favor freedom, but yet deprecate agitation are people who want the crops without plowing up the ground. We want the rain without the thunder and the lightning. We want the the ocean without the awful roar of his many waters. And the struggle may be a moral one. Or it may be a physical one. Or it may be both a moral and a physical one. But it must be a struggle, because power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did. And it never will. And people might not get all that they pay for in this world, but they most certainly must pay for all that they get. Show me show me the exact amount of wrongs and injustices that are visited upon the people. And I will show you the exact amount of wrongs and justices that are endured by these people. And these wrongs and injustices must be fought with words or with blows or with both because the limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those who they oppress. So said Frederick Douglass. Thank you very much.