



**SERVICE  
EMPLOYEES**  
INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO, CLC

**CALIFORNIA STATE COUNCIL**

1007 Seventh Street, 4th Floor • Sacramento, CA 95814 • (916) 442-3838

April 28, 1992

TO: Honorable Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

FROM: Allen Davenport, Legislative Advocate

RE: SB 1448 (Hart)--OPPOSE

The California State Council of the Service Employees International Union opposes enactment of Senate Bill 1448, by Senator Gary Hart, in its present form.

As a union representing classified school employees in large urban school districts, we have considerable doubt as to whether the independent "charter school" approach is an appropriate way to improve public schools. Sending school districts off in 100 different directions to experiment with educating children at public expense seems to be a recipe for chaos rather than reform. Our children are too precious and our tax dollars too scarce to indulge this experiment.

To some of our members this bill appears to look back to "separate but equal" schools. "Charter schools" could operate with substantially different educational requirements and responsibilities, and less oversight, than other schools in the district.

SEIU's particular **fiscal concern** with SB 1448 is that the "charter schools" would be exempt from "all laws governing school districts," but receive average per-student funding. So they would get all of the funding, but few of the responsibilities. This would effectively drain needed revenue from non-charter public schools.

Among the laws that are waived by SB 1448 are those governing collective bargaining rights for classified school employees. Under the bill, a charter school would no longer be required to employ district classified employees or honor the collective bargaining agreement with these employees. *Since these schools would not be private sector, these employees would be left with no labor relations law at all.* Yet schools with district employees with collectively bargained wages would receive the same level of funding as the "charter schools" where employees had no collective bargaining rights. SB 1448 would encourage school boards to establish schools offering low wages and no health or pension benefits in order to undercut standards for dedicated workers throughout a district.

SEIU is dedicated to improving public education. We wish to work with the Legislature for positive improvements in our schools. Unfortunately, SB 1448 will take school reform off-track; and therefore we must oppose this bill.

cc: Senator Hart