

Wilson signs bill to create new schools set up by parents, community groups

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SACRAMENTO (AP) — A bill that will allow parents, teachers and community groups to create 100 schools that will seek new ways to educate children free of current rules has been signed into law by Gov. Pete Wilson.

The Republican governor signed a "charter school" bill by Sen. Gary Hart, D-Santa Barbara. But Wilson's office also said Monday that he vetoed a rival bill, backed by teachers unions, by Assemblywoman Delaine Eastin, D-Fremont.

Wilson also signed a bill that will allow taxpayers to voluntarily contribute money on their tax forms for breast cancer research.

But the governor vetoed two bills allowing employee groups to negotiate agency shop contracts with the University of California and California State University.

The school bill will allow parents, teachers, community groups and other organizations to design a charter school. The school would get an operating permit from a local school district. It would be run by the regulations in its charter and be exempt from most school laws.

Districts may grant charters only if a petition is signed by either 10 percent of the teachers employed by the district or by 50 percent of the teachers in one district school.

Charter schools could not charge tuition and could not be created from private schools. Students would have to take state

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tests and meet state performance standards.

The schools may have admission requirements but not residency requirements. Charters will be granted for five-year periods. The new law limits the number of charter schools to 10 in a single district and 100 statewide.

The Eastin bill would have required teachers unions to approve charter schools and subject teachers in the schools to collective bargaining.

The breast cancer bill by Assemblywoman Jackie Speier, D-South San Francisco, will allow taxpayers to make contributions to a state research fund on their income tax forms.

The agency shop bills, by Assemblyman Jack O'Connell, D-Santa Barbara, and Senate leader David Roberti, D-Van Nuys, would have allowed contracts

that require UC and CSU employees to join a union, pay a "fair share" service fee to the union or make a comparable contribution to a charity.

Bill supporters say agency shop agreements allow unions to get some support from non-union workers who benefit from union representation, but Wilson said the bills were inappropriate.

"There is simply no need to compel employees to pay fees to the union if they do not wish to join," he said.