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Charter schools an element of true reform

Education reform. The mere mention of the term literally scares the heck out of the Colorado Education Association and those educational bureaucrats that do not want to see any change take place in the way the public schools currently educate our children.

That became evident last week when S. 183, a bill that would create a Colorado "charter school" system, came before the Colorado Senate Education Committee.

The bill's sponsor, state Sen. Bill Owens of Aurora, claimed after the hearing on the bill that the CEA and others who are opposed to change were trying to "gut" the bill's reform measures.

What a surprise. The CEA opposing an education reform measure.

When questioned about their opposition to S. 183, CEA President Dan Morris stated, "We're not opposed to the concept of charter schools, we're opposed to charter schools that don't meet the needs of all students."

What did he say? My reading is that the only charter school system the CEA can sup-



port is one that is identical to the same bureaucratic system that currently exists. In other words, the CEA will oppose any bill that challenges the status quo in education.

S. 183 is a good bill. It has bipartisan support, including that of Gov. Roy Romer. If the bill were to be approved, experimental schools would be established free from school district regulations, allowing for a variety of arrangements, such as business-owned schools and specialty schools that would be aimed at minority students, and

students with special needs or talents.

The bill would even allow for teachers to strike out on their own to develop and run a school, free of school administrators and bureaucratic rules and regulations that in many cases prevent new and innovative teaching concepts to develop.

Sen. Owens legislation should be welcomed by teachers as an opportunity to improve public education. Instead, the leadership of their teachers union is deep sixing the proposals by trying to tie down the legislation with the very rules and regulations that have hurt, not helped, public education in Colorado.

Parents, students and teachers should get behind Sen. Owens' S. 183. It presents a unique opportunity to improve the quality of education in Colorado. It would be a tragedy if the majority of teachers who make up the membership in the CEA allow their leadership to kill such a worthy piece of legislation.

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