



The Voice for Children in Colorado

TO: Senator Regis Groff
Senator Bob Martinez
Senator Jana Mendez

FROM: Barbara O'Brien
Colorado Children's Campaign

DATE: February 11, 1993

RE: SB183 Charter Schools

I worked very hard to pass Amendment #6 to raise the sales tax for public schools. I was afraid that if we didn't find new money for public schools in the November election, the opportunity would be gone for years to come.

I also lead a coalition of 750 groups that is working on meeting the Goals of the Decade of the Child (see attached). After four years of work, we are finally seeing progress in meeting the health goals: prenatal care and infant mortality have improved significantly and the teen birth rate has improved in Denver for two years in a row.

The education goals, however, have mixed results. We are closer to meeting the preschool goal as a result of the Colorado Preschool Project. However, Denver and Adams County have the worst graduation rates in the state and the graduation rate for Denver continues to worsen. Even more alarming, the gap between the graduation rates of the rest of the state and Denver and Adams County has more than doubled since 1988. Denver and Adams county are falling further behind.

I am leading the Charter Schools movement because I believe that the most high risk students are not being served well by the current system. I worked hard for better funding for the schools and I am working hard for increased flexibility in meeting the needs of these students. With a 50 percent drop out rate for some minority groups, I don't see why we should be patient or cautious.

We can take advantage of a Charter Schools opportunity to create schools where students thrive, their parents are welcome, and the school is accountable for meeting educational and civil rights goals. I will be active in ensuring that all students are included.