

Submitter: Becky Schiefelbein
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB767

I am writing in opposition to SB 767. As it is written, this bill assumes that locating a suitable school facility is a simple checklist item that any school could accomplish easily. In reality, this is one of the greatest challenges a charter school can face. Facility options are limited by restrictive zoning, low building inventory, competition from wealthy developers, and the search for a building with adequate square footage and acreage. When options do arise, they are often too expensive, especially considering the school's obligation to seismically retrofit that building. When a school district needs a new facility the taxpayers are asked to pay for it with a bond that is above and beyond the existing school budget, allowing schools to be modernize or built without any extra fundraising or years of planning and saving on the district's part. But when a charter school needs a facility, we are on our own, with no extra state funding. Fundraising and careful bugeting has allowed City View Charter School to search for a facility that will become their forever home, but that search has taken years. If given the option we would locate the facility in central Hillsboro. But the building we have identified, finally, happens to be located half a mile outside the Hillsboro School District boundaries, though still within the city limits of the City of Hillsboro.

I ask that this bill be amended in a way that would allow charter schools such as City View to continue to exist. Allowing a school facility to be located within one mile of its sponsoring district's boundaries would go far in allowing schools in rapidly growing districts to find suitable and affordable options in an otherwise inhospitable market. Real estate should not be the reason that any charter school is forced to close their doors.