

Submitter: James Impara
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure: SB767

My name is Jim Impara. I live and vote in the Pinehurst School District. Pinehurst is a rural, one school district located in the mountains of southeastern Jackson County. I taught at the Pinehurst School for 13 years. My wife served on the school board for 14 years.

I strongly support SB767.

The situation at Pinehurst was the impetus for the legislation before you. A well funded California corporation, John Adams Academy, attempted to obtain charter school sponsorship from the Pinehurst School District in order to create a school outside our district. Legal oversight and control of the school would rest with our school board. Voters within the district the school was to be located within would have no legal control or oversight of the school. This scenario subverts the concept of a community controlling its local schools.

The John Adams School has a political and educational philosophy they sell as classical. The thrust of their philosophy is traditional and conservative. Some may welcome a school like John Adams into their community. However, it is not difficult to imagine a scenario that should frighten any member of a small, rural community: Suppose a well funded California corporation that categorizes itself as liberal and progressive obtains Oregon sponsorship from an urban district. As the law is now interpreted, the charter school could then drop a school or schools within small, rural school districts throughout the state without any approval of the local school districts. The well endowed facilities of the California school would draw students, and as a consequence sap desperately needed students from the rural districts. The local school boards would have no control of over how their students are being taught or control over the educational culture that is now an integral part of their communities. SB767 would protect rural school districts, as well as all Oregon districts, from an uncontrolled outside influence injecting its outside values into the school district and siphoning vitally needed resources away from the local school district. I urge you to vote in favor of SB767.