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For Immediate Release - Senator Joyce Waddell's Remarks on House Bill 514

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Sent: Thursday, May 31, 2018 11:22 AM



From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 31, 2018

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Senator Joyce Waddell's Remarks on House Bill 514

Charlotte, NC – The North Carolina Senate voted on the second reading of House Bill 514, Permit Municipal Charter School/Certain Towns today at session. This legislation allows Matthews, Mint Hill, Huntersville, and Cornelius to separate from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and create their own charter schools. Further debate is scheduled for next week.

Senator Joyce Waddell made remarks on the Senate Floor concerning the legislation:

“This appears to be a bad bill, because the bill adds zero to the promise of public education. I’ve heard it several times, but I feel compelled at this point to ask that you vote no. The bill would practically create double taxation for people in Matthews and Mint Hill. People have not had ample time to discuss and research things contained in the bill. This appears to be a bad bill. The funding is insufficient to support high-quality schools. I say this because of my two terms on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. These were communities that were part of CMS schools, and I would hate to see them move forward in this way. This bill would require residents in these areas to pay taxes for two separate school systems at the same time. Do the citizens and parents really know what is involved in this bill? So far, the residents of these towns continue to pay the state and local county taxes for education. This bill would force them to pay additional town taxes. The bill fails to guarantee students a quality of education, with kids first. Every student would not be guaranteed a seat, with every resident burdened by taxes. This bill promotes adoption of an experimental structure for K-12 students that is unproven. It would also set a precedent to add more costly and complex administrative structures across the entire state. We heard research about the division of school systems during committee meetings.

Gerry Cohen compiled a report on House Bill 514 which included seven major findings. We heard nothing that would be advantageous to implement this system. We looked at two communities who recently joined this system. Have they had town hall meetings to inform citizens? At one point, this General Assembly had a cap for 100 charter schools. I wish we had kept that cap, but we opened it to have more changes. Why do we need to separate? Another finding from the Cohen Report addresses property taxes. Have we heard all of the information regarding this? Again, I say this bill harms our public school system while adding a greater tax burden on hard-working residents. I say vote no and thank you.

I want to let you know that when it comes to CMS, there are many choices. The passing of House Bill 514 would be detrimental to the students of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. This legislation separates the rich from the poor and the haves from the have-nots. It does not provide equal access to education. We should not want legislation that would create racial division in our schools. Instead of towns trying to build more charter schools, we need the community to support and help increase resources for our public schools. House Bill 514 will open the door to a more segregated community and close the door on access to opportunities for those who need it most in Mecklenburg County. Further, this bill hurts our public school system while adding a greater tax

burden on hard-working residents of North Carolina.”

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