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## For Immediate Release - Senator Joyce Waddell's "House Bill 514, Municipal Charter Schools"

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Sent: Friday, June 01, 2018 4:32 PM



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



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 1, 2018

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### House Bill 514, Municipal Charter Schools

**Charlotte, NC** – On May 31, the North Carolina Senate completed the second reading of House Bill 514, (an act to permit certain towns to operate charter schools). If it becomes session law, this legislation will allow the Mecklenburg County towns of Matthews, Mint Hill, Huntersville, and Cornelius to open charter schools granting priority to students that reside in these suburban areas, which are predominantly white. The creation of the bill arose from towns within Mecklenburg County who complained about the lack of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' facilities and resources.

Senator Joyce Waddell and fellow Democratic legislators expressed their concerns that this type of bill would create schools that are more racially biased and potentially economically segregated. Although the bill is a local bill, it appears to have statewide implications because of language adopted in the state conference report allowing cities to fund either traditional public schools or charter schools. Also, residents in various towns in Mecklenburg County would be subject to property taxes to establish these municipal charter schools, but all students in these towns would not be able to enroll.

Gerry Cohen, who was employed by the General Assembly for nearly forty years and served as a staff attorney and Director of Legislative Drafting, created a report which included major findings concerning House Bill 514. The Cohen Report stated that State funds could not be used to acquire land or construct the charter school in Mecklenburg County towns. The towns would be authorized by state statute to levy taxes in order to use municipal funds to build a charter school. The only way a municipal charter school could pay to build a school, buy land, or build classrooms would be through county pass through funds, donations, grants, or town property taxes. In addition, the charter school would then be considered a part of the town and not a separate entity.

The debate over House Bill 514 continues next week.

**“The passing of House Bill 514 would be detrimental to the students of Charlotte-Mecklenburg; it does not provide equal access to education. We should not want legislation that would create racial division in our schools. Instead of creating more charter schools, we need the community to support and help increase resources for Charlotte-Mecklenburg System public schools. House Bill 514 opens the door to a more segregated community and closes the door to access and opportunities for those in need. House Bill 514 drastically affects the future of CMS public schools while placing a deeper tax burden on Mecklenburg County’s working class and those of North Carolina,”** said Senator Joyce Waddell.

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