



AFL-CIO  
AFL-CIO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tue, 16 May 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT PERSON:

David Hecker 313-393-2200

or 313-204-6115

dhecker@aftmichigan.org

## N.Y. Times Rips Michigan Charter Schools

**DETROIT** – The problems with Michigan’s charter schools are now a national issue, one certain to have a negative impact on economic development and jobs.

The lead editorial in the May 10 *New York Times*, “Reining in Charter Schools,” highlights Michigan’s charters and concludes that “the states will need to abandon the [charter school] strategy, now discredited, that consists largely of giving public money to what are basically private schools and then looking the other way.”

Specifically, the *Times* noted that “Michigan...has become a textbook example of how sloppily administered charter programs can harm students...”, citing work by the Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University. The *Times* criticized Michigan for having “quickly opened more than 200 schools under one of the most liberal laws,” writing that “the program has been ridiculed with problems from the start.”

The *Times* noted that “several studies have shown that on the whole, charter schools perform no better than other public schools.” Moreover, writing that 75% of Michigan’s charters are run by commercial for profit companies, the *Times* cited the finding that “programs dominated by for-profit education companies have poorer results for those schools in terms of performance and accountability.”

“When will charter school advocates learn,” stated AFT Michigan President David Hecker, “the charter school strategy is not working.” “With the *New York Times* editorial, now the world knows,” Hecker continued. “Education plays a major role in a businesses location and job creation decisions. Unfortunately for Michigan, businesses will think more than twice before coming to a state that takes money away from our traditional public schools and gives it, in the words of the *Times*, to basically private schools and then looking the other way.”

\*\*\*

*AFT Michigan is a union of 35,000-members working in K-12 and intermediate school districts, community colleges, universities, and local government. The 93 locals extend as far south as Monroe and north to Whitefish Township in the Upper Peninsula.*