

## Celebrating Chartering @ 30 – MINNESOTA'S STORY

While Senator Reichgott saw the compromise amendment as the end of the road, Rep. Nelson and other legislators who supported chartering saw it as the road to keep chartering moving forward. In a 2011 interview for *Zero Chance of Passage*, Rep. Nelson recalled:

*"It wasn't to kill it. It was actually to keep it alive. And, I think it really helped to keep it alive.... I thought the one amendment with teachers in charge was a good one. It was the original Shanker vision. But also, why not? It just seemed to me teachers knew best. We limited it to eight schools, and I thought that was enough for a trial run. And approval by the local board and the state board – we knew the state board would do it .... And then the local board – you didn't want the local board fighting everything..."*

Senator Dicklich, also a strong charter supporter, approved of the compromise. Senator Dicklich stated:

*"I just wanted to get the charter schools started. I was interested in one. I wasn't going to hold this thing up and have them stalemate it, because I wasn't willing to just take eight schools. That's my feeling. Let's look and see how things are."*

Even Representative Becky Kelso, the House author, supported the compromise amendment. In a 2011 interview she stated: *"To me, the narrowing was not a bad thing. I thought it was a reasonable way to start. You get what you can, then you get what you want"*.

Despite these legislative supporters being in favor of the compromise, Senator Reichgott and other proponents saw the compromise as the dead kneel of chartering. So, the question for Senator Reichgott became - do you accept the compromise or do you lay the bill over for another year?

Senator Dicklich recalled saying to Senator Reichgott:

*"Ember, do you want this thing or not? Three years you've been here... If you don't make it this year, you'll probably never make it. Things only have a shelf life. Let's get it. We'll go after more in future years."*

In the end, Senator Reichgott wrote to the Senate Conferees and thanked them for their support and resigned herself to the charter amendment as part of the charter provisions.

The charter provisions were the last provisions the Conference Committee dealt with. Three of the five House members agreed to the compromise and three Senate members agreed (the other two Senators were supporters but absent) so the compromise amendment passed and chartered schools were in the Conference Committee Omnibus Bill.

**NEXT WEEK:** It is never over until the House and Senate vote on the Omnibus Bill.

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Quotes are from the book: **ZERO CHANCE of PASSAGE**, by Senator Ember Reichgott Junge. Limited copies of the book are still available. To order a copy email: [ember.reichgott@gmail.com](mailto:ember.reichgott@gmail.com)



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