



## Celebrating Chartering @ 30 – MINNESOTA'S STORY

As the Conference Committee convened the week of May 10<sup>th</sup>, the opponents of chartering put the pressure on the House members, especially Rep. Ken Nelson, chair of the House Education Finance Committee. The MFT did a full court press on Rep. Nelson. While they were meeting with him to try to convince him to change his position on chartering, behind the scenes, they were recruiting another legislator, Myron Orfield, to run against him in 1992. (*Redistricting in 1991 put Orfield and Nelson in the same district for the 1992 election*).\*\*

In a 2011 interview for the book ***Zero Chance of Passage***, Senator Reichgott wrote, "...*Louise Sundin*, [President of the MFT] confirmed that the unions were in conversations with Nelson about chartering. When asked whether the union threatened to back another DFL opponent in the next election, she replied. 'Oh no. We wouldn't threaten out loud. We were in the background, grooming somebody else for the spot.'"

Meanwhile, Rep. McEachern, a member of the conference committee and a charter opponent, brought Rose Hermodson, the MFT lobbyist, to a private meeting with some conferees during the final negotiations between the House and Senate. In her book, Senator Reichgott quotes Rep. Nelson:

*"We were meeting in one of the rooms at the capitol. It was not a large meeting room, and I don't know how public it was, or if this was just an effort between the house and senate to knock heads again and come to agreement. But what McEachern did ... was bring in Rose Hermodson to ... speak against [chartering] to house and senate conferees. [It was] totally inappropriate to have a lobbyist come into a conference committee like that ... I think it was one of those meetings where you try to get things focused apart from the public eye .... [It] really put pressure on me because she was not only the lobbyist for MFT but active in my district."*

Rep. Nelson knew that in the conference committee process compromise was likely. So, in the meetings with the unions he listened, and eventually began to draft an amendment to the charter legislation in the hope that the compromise would keep chartering alive. As word got out that he was working on an amendment, proponents of chartering and Senator Reichgott got nervous –

Reichgott thought she had already compromised a lot with the unions by giving up on post-secondary institutions being sponsors and ensuring that all teachers in chartered schools would be licensed.

As Senator Reichgott wrote; *"With compromise in the wings, the question now became 'What's critical and what's not?' for successful chartered schools."*

**NEXT WEEK: The answer to the question and the compromise.**

*\*\* NOTE: What neither the MFT nor anyone else knew at the time was that after his 10<sup>th</sup> election in 1990, Rep. Nelson had decided the 1991-92 term would be his last, as he had been awarded a Bush Fellowship. He was willing to push chartering even against the union pressure.*



---

Copyright © 2022 Minnesota Association of Charter Schools, All rights reserved.

You were added to this list as a sample email to test out MailChimp.

**Our mailing address is:**

Minnesota Association of Charter Schools  
161 St. Anthony Avenue, Suite 1000  
St Paul, MN 55103

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

