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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Commission Statement Regarding the Supreme Court's Ruling

Sunday, September 6, 2015

OLYMPIA, WA – WA Charter Commission statement:

The WA State Charter Commission is deeply disappointed in the Supreme Court's ruling declaring public charters in our state unconstitutional. The negative implications of this ruling are compounded by its dreadful timing, this past Friday, as close to 1000 of our state's most at-risk students in eight charter schools are just beginning their school year. Principals and teachers and community leaders have worked tirelessly over the past two years to open their doors and now they are being told to close. The Supreme Court's decision to overturn the entire law was unexpected. The Court said that public charter schools cannot receive "common school" public funds because they are not overseen by elected boards. Public charter schools are, however, overseen by non-profit boards as well as by the Commission, which is appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor and the Speaker of the House.

The Commission's first responsibility will remain the students and families that it serves. We are exploring every available legal option, and we will be working on a concurrent track to ensure that each of our schools has a plan in place to ensure that its students' needs are met. The Supreme Court's decision will go into effect in 20 days if a motion to reconsider is not filed.

This is a difficult time for the voters who supported the Charter School initiative, and for the community of educators, community leaders, and philanthropists who have given tirelessly to provide an additional option to parents and students who were seeking one. The Commission is incredibly proud of the community of public charters schools that now exist in Highline, Kent, Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, and Walla Walla. Our heart goes out to them as they struggle to make sense of the Supreme Court's decision and how to best serve the students and teachers in their care during this time of uncertainty.

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