

For Immediate Release: March 24, 2015

Contacts:

Hilary Hammell, Public Advocates: 415-625-8466, hhammell@publicadvocates.org

Ricardo A. Ramírez, CPD: 202-464-7376, raramirez@populardemocracy.org

Chris Jackson, parent with ACCE Institute, Oakland: 510-282-1306

Martha Sanchez, parent with ACCE Institute, Los Angeles: 213-884-5315

New Report: California Vulnerable to Widespread Charter School Fraud

A new report released today by Public Advocates, ACCE Institute (Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment) and the Center for Popular Democracy finds massive vulnerabilities to charter school fraud in California that could result in more than \$100 million in waste in 2015.

Read the report, *Risking Public Money: California Charter School Fraud* [here](#).

Despite California's large investment of public dollars and the size of its charter school population, the report finds California has failed to implement an adequate system to monitor charters for fraud, waste and mismanagement. Instead, charter fraud only comes to light if a whistleblower actively brings the case to the state's attention. Without any proactive oversight to prevent fraud, the report explains that the majority of fraud in charter schools will go undetected.

"The current oversight system in California falls far short when it comes to detecting, preventing, and eliminating fraud," said Kyle Serrette, Director of Education at the Center for Popular Democracy. "The millions of children who are enrolled in charter schools nationwide deserve stronger protections."

"Charter schools promised to innovate and show best practices for schools – but is this how they are living up to that promise? This is not an example of how schools should work – this is an example of what not to do," said Martha Sanchez, a parent and community leader with the ACCE Institute.

"California already spends too little on public education, so it's critical to ensure that this money actually goes where it's intended – to serve kids," said Hilary Hammell, an attorney at Public Advocates. "When charter school operators misappropriate public education money, our state's most vulnerable families suffer."

The report, which outlines three fundamental flaws, also recommends that charter schools and the state take a more active approach and that the state conduct a fraud audit of every charter school once every three years.

California charter schools are hardly alone. A national [2014 report](#) by the Center for Popular Democracy documented the growing problem of fraud, waste, and abuse, and found that more than \$100 million has already been lost nationwide due to lack of oversight.

Like other states with significant public investment in charter schools, California must act now to reform its oversight system. Without reform, California stands to lose millions more dollars each year as a result of charter school fraud, waste, and mismanagement.

###