

Governor Stands by His Decision to Oppose Selection of Speaker Eves to Run Charter School

June 25, 2015

AUGUSTA – Governor Paul R. LePage reaffirmed his opposition today to the selection of Speaker of the House Mark Eves as president of Good Will-Hinckley, which runs the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences charter school.

“This back-room deal between cronies is exactly the kind of political corruption I came to Augusta to fight against,” the Governor said. “I will not stand for it and neither will the Maine people. Speaker Eves has been an ardent foe of charter schools for his entire political career, then he turns around and gets hired to run a charter school—whose board is chaired by Eves’ own State House employee—for a cushy job worth about \$150,000 in total compensation. To provide half-a-million dollars in taxpayer funding to a charter school that would be headed by Maine’s most vehement anti-charter-school politician is not only the height of hypocrisy, it is absolutely unacceptable.”

Governor LePage noted that annual funding of \$530,000 for the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences charter school is an investment to insure the school’s success. “To have the school run by someone so opposed to charter schools would be very troublesome,” he said.

Background on Speaker Eves’s consistent opposition to charter schools:

- In 2012, Speaker Eves voted in opposition to “An Act To Amend and Clarify the Public Charter School Law.”
- In 2011, Speaker Eves was absent for the vote on “An Act To Create a Public Charter School Program in Maine.”
- In 2009, Speaker Eves voted against “An Act To Permit Charter Schools in Maine.”

A news release by Speaker Eves, dated February 6, 2013 and posted on his website, states it is a myth that school choice benefits each and every Maine student and that 37 percent of charter schools actually offered children a worse education than traditional schools.

In a news release dated March 22, 2013 and posted on the Maine Democrats website, Eves objected to our proposal to provide \$1 million for lawyer fees for the Maine Charter School Commission, the State Board of Education and the Department of Education. This attempt to provide these legal fees was a reflection of the politically charged atmosphere between strident opponents of charter schools – such as Speaker Eves — and supporters of educational opportunities for all Maine students.

In the release, Speaker Eves states: “The Governor’s priorities are out of step with the parents, students, and teachers of Maine.”