

# WV TEACHERS UNION PLANS TO SUE OVER CHARTER SCHOOL BILL

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — A West Virginia teachers union says it plans to sue over a sweeping GOP education bill that allows the creation of the state's first charter schools.

The West Virginia Education Association released a statement Wednesday saying it has sent the attorney general a formal intent to sue letter that alleges the legislation violates the state constitution.

Republican Gov. Jim Justice signed the measure late last month after a gridlocked special session drew several heavy protests from teachers.

The broad-based measure deals with several aspects of the state's education system, but educators and Democrats fiercely opposed the provision to allow charters. They argued that charters would end up steering money away from public schools.

Neither a House of Delegates spokesman nor a spokesman for Justice returned voicemails seeking comment.

Senate President Mitch Carmichael released a statement expressing his disappointment with the announcement.



*"While we certainly respect the WVEA's right to take its grievances with education reform to a court of law, I'm extremely disheartened by this action. The WVEA is an organization that claims to represent the interests of teachers, yet it has now started a process that puts at risk millions of dollars directly to county school systems and a second consecutive year of 5-percent raises to teachers and service personnel. It's sad that the obsessive hysteria over the possibility of an elected county board of education authorizing a charter school - two years from now - is enough to completely overshadow the benefits of House Bill 206. This bill gives West Virginia's students, teachers, and parents a multitude of resources that are desperately needed and wanted, and they help lay a foundation for the kind of world-class education our children deserve. I'm not surprised by the attempt of these union bosses to derail the Legislature's efforts to improve education, but I'm still very disappointed by it."-- Senate President Mitch Carmichael, R-Jackson*