

# NATIONAL REVIEW

## The Miseducation of the New York Times, Ctd.

Ramesh Ponnuru

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Yesterday I noted that a New York Times editorial against Betsy DeVos, Trump’s nominee for Education Secretary, included a craftily misleading description of the performance of Detroit’s charter schools. Another distortion in the editorial also deserves comment. It claims that DeVos “has poured money into charter schools advocacy, winning legislative changes that have reduced oversight and accountability.”

You might think, then, that DeVos got legislation enacted that, well, reduced oversight of charter schools. The linked article, although biased against DeVos,\* makes no such claim.

Rather, it shows that DeVos intervened to force the modification of legislation about charter schools. She opposed the creation of a commission that would have given traditional public schools a say in which charter-school networks could expand and which charter schools could continue to operate. (More on that dispute here and here.) The legislation that was eventually enacted omitted that provision and instead “allow[ed] the state to close the schools at the bottom of existing state rankings.” There was, in other words, no reduction in oversight and accountability.

\* Kate Zernike’s story claims that “Ms. DeVos pushed back on any regulation as too much regulation. Charter schools should be allowed to operate as they wish; parents would judge with their feet.” Yet she offers nothing to back up this claim of hostility to any regulation; she links to a DeVos op-ed in which she calls for “aggressive intervention—including closure—of the state’s lowest performing traditional and charter schools”; and her own article mentions DeVos’s support for closing those low-performing schools. Zernike obviously objects to this policy (“But that will mean shutting down mostly traditional public schools, which in Detroit serve the neediest students, and further desert students in neighborhoods where charters have largely declined to go”), but it contradicts her assertion that DeVos opposes all regulation.

Zernike also depicts Clark Durant, a leading conservative in Michigan, as having been opposed to DeVos on charter regulations. He tells me that DeVos “was right to oppose” the commission as it was proposed. He also says that he “absolutely” supports her nomination, a fact Zernike omits.