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KIDDIE PARADE

The Electronetts Drill Team joined half a dozen other drill teams and hundreds of children at the annual Wallingford Kiddie Parade. The parade, which is all about the kids, has been held every summer for over 60 years.



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

No Child Law Not Applied

Feds weaken Bush Era policy after Congress' inaction

By Donna Gordon Blankinship
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — The Obama administration said Friday that two more states, Washington and Wisconsin, will be exempted from many requirements of the federal "No Child Left Behind" education law.

The decision brings to 26 the number of states granted waivers as Congress remains at a stalemate regarding an overhaul to former President George W. Bush's signature accomplishment. With more than half of the states now free from many of the law's requirements, there are questions about the future of No Child Left Behind.

The Education Department began granting the waivers in February in exchange for promises from states to improve how they prepare and evaluate students. The executive action by Obama is part of an ongoing effort to act on his own when Congress is rebuffing him.

The administration says the waivers are a temporary measure while Education Secretary Arne Duncan continues to work with Congress to rewrite the law, which is formally known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

"A strong, bipartisan reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act remains the best path forward in education reform, but as 26 states have now demonstrated, our kids can't wait any longer for Congress to act," Duncan said in a statement released Friday.

The 10-year-old federal No Child Left Behind law requires all students to achieve proficient math and reading scores by 2014, a goal that many educators say is impossible.

Members of both parties say the No Child Left Behind law is broken but have been unable to agree on how to fix it. While it has been praised for focusing on the performance of minorities, low-income students, English language learners and special edu-

Charter Schools on the Ballot

Dorn opposes what he calls 'alternative state schools system'

By Donna Gordon Blankinship
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Supporters of charter schools submitted more than enough signatures Friday in their efforts to put the initiative on the November ballot, shifting the work to persuading Washington voters it will be good for students.

Using paid and volunteer signature gatherers, backers collected about 350,000 signatures for Initiative 1240 in about three

weeks. A ballot initiative needs about 242,000 valid signatures to qualify, and must be approved by the Secretary of State's office.

State voters previously rejected charter schools in 1996, 2000 and 2004.

The campuses offer options for parents frustrated with regular public schools. Some research have found these independent public schools are especially good at helping minority and low-income students improve their learning, close the

achievement gap and head to college.

The state's largest teachers union says the privately run, publicly funded schools take money from traditional public schools and have not been shown to do a better job at improving student achievement.

Other opponents, including Gov. Chris Gregoire, many lawmakers and gubernatorial candidate Jay Inslee, say Washington has lots of innovative schools and welcomes more creativity in the classroom.

Supporters say parents should decide and the state should take what was learned elsewhere by offering only types of charter schools that have shown to improve achievement, making sure the oversight is excellent, and quickly shutting down the schools that aren't working.

The coalition of education reform groups bringing charter schools back to the ballot say the initiative was written with those ideas in mind.

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Crowded Field for Secretary of State

State has had only two people in the office over the past 30 years

By Chris Grygiel
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — A rarity in Washington state politics — an open race to be Washington's top election official — has attracted a crowded field of high-profile candidates.

Among those running for secretary of state are Greg Nickels, a former Seattle

mayor who gained a national profile for his environmental activism; Jim Kastama, a conservative Democratic state senator who was a key swing vote in state budget negotiations; Kim Wyman, Thurston County's auditor; and Kathleen Drew, a former state senator and former aide to Gov. Chris Gregoire.

Washington state has had only two secretaries of state since 1980, Ralph Munro and

the incumbent, Sam Reed, who is not seeking re-election. The secretary of state, who oversees state and local elections and registers and licenses private corporations, is traditionally not as visible a job as governor or attorney general. However in recent years the office has been more in the spotlight, as tens of millions of dollars pour into initia-

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