



# PEORIA CHARTER

*Experience our experience.*

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AVAILABLE FOR IN PERSON INTERVIEWS. CALL OR EMAIL

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## Peoria Charter Will Close in November Without Federal Aid

**Peoria, IL** — Peoria Charter Coach has made National News from the [Washington Post Article](#) on October 8, 2020, after the devastating news from President Donald Trump that negotiations would be ending on a Relief Bill until after the elections. According to company Owner/President Bill Winkler, “We are not able to wait until after the elections. Right now I’m surviving with a \$150,000 line of credit, and trying to drum up cash wherever I can find it.” Over the past 6 months, Peoria Charter has refunded over \$500,000 in deposits, experienced more than \$5 million in cancellations, and seen a 94% reduction in business. The company laid off most employees after a PPP loan ran out in July. “I think that has been the hardest part of this whole thing. Knowing that our loyal and hardworking employees are at home struggling because we can’t operate as business until the State is opened and COVID has gone away.”

When asked who is to blame Winkler had a simple answer, “Anybody who has any leadership in Washington, D.C. Our politicians. It’s everybody. Get together, help us out, that’s what we put you in office for. This is unprecedented — it will never happen again. Unprecedented times means unprecedented decisions.” The Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services Act or CERTS Act was brought to the floor of the House by Representative Darin LaHood (IL-18) on July 16, 2020. The bill has received majority support in both the House and Senate, with [237 Cosponsors in the House of Representatives](#) and [54 Cosponsors in the Senate](#). This is more support than any other industry-specific relief bill in Washington DC. Yet, the bill was still left out of the House Democrat \$2.2 trillion bill passed over to the GOP Senate last week. “We are being failed by the Democrats and Republicans. While Airlines, Amtrak, and Mass Transit has received over \$65 billion in Federal Aid, the Motorcoach Industry has received \$0. Now, the Airlines are wanting to get back in line for round 2 before small business even gets a chance to save our businesses,” explained Winkler.

Peoria Charter was founded in 1941 by Bill Winkler’s Grandfather, Walter Winkler. His family business would be turning 80 years old in January 2021, but it will not happen without the Federal Government making more PPP money available to businesses like his or passing the CERTS Act to provide industry-specific aid to Motorcoaches. “This is not something specific to Peoria Charter Coach. There is not a Motorcoach company in the United States that is not on the verge of closing and looking to the Federal Government to keep their doors open,” said Bill Winkler. Before COVID-19, Peoria Charter transported 500,000 passengers over 3.8 million miles every year. “This is not the story of a struggling business having troubles made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. We were growing. In the last 6 months before March 2020 we broke sales records each month. We were doing the best we had ever done in our 79 year history and it all came crashing down seemingly overnight. This could be any business. This could be you. All we are asking is to be treated the same as the other modes of transportation. Barring that, the buses with ‘Peoria Charter’ on the side will no longer be seen across the country.”

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**Interviews**– Bill Winkler is available for in-person or over-the-phone interviews. Please call 309-251-4000.