

CTA-Sponsored Measure

Second Grade Test Ban Stalls, Gains Reconsideration

CTA and opponents of developmentally inappropriate testing that harms young children and jeopardizes their instructional time suffered a temporary setback in the Senate Education Committee on April 15 following a lengthy and acrimonious debate on the bill. CTA-sponsored SB 800, by Sen. Loni Hancock, fell one vote short of the five needed for passage, but the bill's author immediately gained the right to have the measure reconsidered following negotiations with opponents. SB 800 could come up again in two weeks.

Voting with CTA and for the bill were Senators Hancock (D), Carol Liu (co-author) (D), Alex Padilla (D), and Abel Maldonado (R).

Voting against CTA and against the measure were Committee Chair Sen. Gloria Romero (D) and Senators Elaine Alquist (D), Joe Simitian (D), Bob Huff (R), and Mark Wyland (R).

The CTA-sponsored bill would eliminate the second-grade California Standards Test requirement in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, effective July 10, 2010. The elimination of second-grade testing would save the state approximately \$2 million annually and free up time that could be devoted to instruction.

The measure would also bring the state into conformity with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which requires testing of students in third grade or above.

During the April 15 hearing in the Senate Education Committee, CTA representatives and other bill supporters -- including the California State PTA, United Teachers Los Angeles, Californians Together, and the San Diego Unified School District -- drove home the point that the current exam unnecessarily stresses youngsters of that age and does not provide valid and reliable information quickly or in a manner that teachers can use to help their Grade 2 students. Objections to the bill came from lawmakers who insisted that other assessment alternatives be substituted including a new statewide diagnostic test for second graders before eliminating the Grade 2 CST. Their rationale is that the state needs to have data on the reading proficiency levels of second graders in order to guide policy making decisions.

A telling moment came when Sen. Abel Maldonado recounted how his own son, Dino, was forced to take the lengthy multiple choice exam, which ultimately yielded little or no information to help his instruction. The senator talked about his son's stress and the clear fact that the exam -- including its length and nature -- was not appropriate for young children.

CTA Members:

Continue to write and call members of Senate Education to support the CTA-sponsored SB 800 (Hancock) when it is reconsidered by the committee within the next two weeks. Tell your stories about how the exam has impacted your classroom and your students. Use the list below for contact information for members of the Senate committee.

For more information, contact CTA GR Communications Consultant Len Feldman at lfeldman@cta.org.

Members of the Senate Education Committee

Gloria Romero – Chair	Dem-24	(916) 651-4024
Bob Huff – Vice Chair	Rep-29	(916) 651-4029
Elaine Alquist	Dem-41	(916) 651-4013
Loni Hancock	Dem-9	(916) 651-4009
Carol Liu	Dem-21	(916) 651-4021
Abel Maldonado	Rep-15	(916) 651-4015
Alex Padilla	Dem-20	916-651-4020
Joe Simitian	Dem-11	(916) 651-4011
Mark Wyland	Rep-38	(916) 651-4038

Address your letters to Legislators:
The Hon. ____
The State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

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