

June 2, 1011

Madame Chair and members of the committee:

Thank you for your work to help ensure our children grow up to be productive citizens. Your task is difficult and I respect the dedication you have to the issues surrounding funding education.

Part of a child's education has to focus on health. If children are not healthy, they are not in school. If they are not in school, the school loses money. If a child is obese, they miss more school than an average child does. That costs the school more money.

There is language in SB 8 that reduces fitness testing to only PE classes. This is like saying we will only test the smart kids. Many of our children in lower socioeconomic conditions cannot afford a yearly physical. This fitness test gives all children basic information about how healthy they are. It tells a school if their student population has issues and can help them determine where to focus energy in making sure their students are healthy and able to learn.

There have been bills passed this session that deal with mental health issues. Kids who are active and healthy are less likely to have mental health issues. Obese kids have described their perspective as the same as someone who has cancer.

The fitness testing program has been in place for four years. The only cost at this time is the time it takes to administer the test. We do eye exams, scoliosis, and hearing...but we don't care if our children are over weight, or might have cardio issues?

I understand there has been concern about the results being given out publically. I can assure you that is not the intent of the testing and if that has happened, it is something that should be taken up with the individual school and the District where it occurred. You don't stop giving math tests because one teacher announced the students with failing scores. You shouldn't stop doing fitness testing because of isolated incidents.

Please, reconsider the plan to reduce fitness testing to only PE classes. This will give only a few children and families an idea of how healthy their children are, it will not give schools any indication of how healthy their overall student population might be.

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