

California Teachers Association

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CTA and Senator Loni Hancock Introduce Legislation Today to Halt Needless, Costly Testing of Second Graders Teachers Say High Stakes Testing of Second Grade Students Is Not Helpful to Students and Wastes Precious Instructional Time

SACRAMENTO – Committed to protecting second grade students from the unnecessary and costly high stakes testing that they are put through each year and aligning the testing system with the federally mandated No Child Left Behind Act, today the California Teachers Association and Senator Loni Hancock announced the introduction of legislation to halt second grade testing.

“The standardized testing that our second grade students are forced to undergo each year does not help them and it does not assist teachers in assessing their performance, development and learning needs, said David A. Sanchez, president of the 340,000-member organization. “Eliminating these tests will free up precious instructional time that teachers need with these students and it would save millions in the face of unprecedented cuts to public school funding.”

Senate Bill 800 exempts second graders from the annual Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program, aligning the state program with the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which doesn't require statewide testing until third grade. The law that would have ended second grade testing June 30, 2007, was extended to 2011 by the Big 5 in a budget education trailer bill in 2007. According to California Department of Education estimates, the cost of administering and supporting second grade testing is approximately \$4.5 million.

“If we are going to reduce funding to local school districts, we should reduce the bureaucratic requirements we place on them. We need to let teachers teach,” said Senator Hancock. “Testing second graders simply starts the ‘teaching to the test’ process too early. We don't need to formalize this process by mandating a test as early as second grade.”

“Teachers believe that testing students is an important component in assessing their development and learning needs, but second grade tests are not helping teachers help our students. Additionally, these tests create harmful, unintended consequences for our youngest learners because they are not age and developmentally appropriate. At a time when the state is cutting billions from education, it certainly makes sense to cut unnecessary, mandated tests.” said Sanchez.

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CTA is affiliated with the 3.2 million-member National Education Association.