

Dear Members of the House Education Committee:

One sunny spring afternoon last year, I wound my way through the crowded hallways of my son's elementary school after dismissal. Capturing bits of students' conversations, I overheard one girl ask another, "Where's Lily?"

"Oh, she died from state testing," the student responded, and they both laughed. While said in jest, this flippant comment reflects the experience of a generation, as more than fifteen years have passed since the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002. Recent high school graduates spent the entirety of their K-12 education participating in some version of standardized tests required by NCLB and other federal accountability policies. At this point, it's necessary to question whether these policies have increased student performance and whether the results justify the ongoing costs.

I'm writing in support of HB 2318, which will prohibit mandated standardized testing for children in grades PreK-2. My stance on standardized testing stems from my own personal and professional experiences, supplemented by academic research. As a classroom teacher in a large, urban school district, I witnessed the devastating impacts of high-stakes testing, from involuntary teacher transfers to questionable teacher evaluation practices. As a test developer, I keenly understand the cost and complexity of quality assessment design as well as the critical need to align effective measures with appropriate decisions. As a parent, I've observed an increased focus on testing with my own children, as more instructional time and resources are devoted to test preparation and administration. I recently completed my doctorate in Education Studies, and my dissertation research focused on teacher activism and resistance to standardized testing. Findings indicate that teachers support effective assessment in principle, but have many concerns about the scope and impact of standardized testing, and the subsequent strain on school resources, personnel, and student and teacher morale. Please support HB 2318 and work toward a more reasonable and effective approach to student assessment.

Sincerely,

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