



DAN FLYNN

★DISTRICT 2★

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Contact: David Erinakes
Phone: (512) 463-0880

Rep. Flynn's HB2491 Receives Tremendous Support in Public Hearing

Austin, TX - Representative Dan Flynn lead a packed audience in a passionate presentation of House Bill 2491, the Teacher Support Act, to the Public Education Committee. Representative Flynn stated, "This is an effort to provide support to teachers who may be at risk." Flynn continued, "Teachers are the core of what works and what is good in the system and we have to protect them." When adding to the costs for testing, which can easily go well into the hundreds of thousands of dollars in a school district, the costs can be staggering. That has got to change and we need to put teachers first before implementing a new costly testing program.

Representative Flynn was greatly concerned about the costs of the testing versus the protection of teachers and after long conversations with parents, superintendents and teachers from House District 2 as well as other areas of the state, felt this was a solid step in the right direction. Many witnesses agreed and stated their belief that this is a good first step to reduce the extraordinary costs of the educational bureaucracy. Keith Murphy, Van High School Principal, testified that "There are two aspects when looking at education; the art of education and the best practices of education and we have to apply both of them." Dr. Donna Wallace, Deputy Director of Secondary Education and Accountability from Van ISD, spoke about the 91 million dollars being the cost for the year and how it could be better spent. She further explained her concerns for state funded mandates that the districts will be required to comply with. Rexanne Thomas, Special Education Director at Van ISD, echoed those concerns and spoke about the many lost classroom days this new system would require. Representative Flynn thanked Chairman Eissler and the committee for their willingness to hear HB 2491 as the educational community feels very strongly about this moratorium.

Witnesses testified that testing days may increase from

25 to as many as 45 days. They further testified that there are about 4,700 pages of implementation instructions for this testing program. Superintendent John Kuhn from Perrin-Whitt ISD said, 'I have a wheel barrow outside but DPS would not let me bring it in to carry all of this information.' This mandate adds enormous costs to the budget and takes away from valuable teaching time. The purpose of this bill is to reduce these costs and to ensure protection for teachers that are so vital to our children's futures. The reduction in testing days alone is estimated to free up funds which can be used more efficiently and effectively by schools.

Under this bill, each child will still be tested in the classroom over their regular studies as normal, but the state mandated testing would be suspended for a period of two years and any funding associated with this testing could be spent supporting teacher jobs and the resources they need. Under this legislation, Superintendents of Independent School Districts (ISD) with concurrence from the ISD School Board, not the state, are authorized to suspend all state mandated testing and assessments for a period ending September 30, 2013.

Many esteemed groups including the Association of Texas Professional Educators, Texans for Fiscal Responsibility, Texas Rural Education Association, Texas Association of Middle Schools and the Texas Classroom Teachers Association publically expressed their support while only The Texas Institute of Education Reform expressed any doubt. In an additional show of support, this legislation has been joint authored by many other House members that are equally concerned with supporting teachers first. Currently, 23 legislators are either Authoring or Co-Authoring the legislation and more are expected to join this effort. Representative Flynn encourages the committee to vote out HB 2491 and send it to the full house for consideration.

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