



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

PO Box 47990 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7990

March 19, 2009

The Honorable Dave Quall, Chair
Committee on Education
Washington State House of Representatives
Post Office Box 40600
Olympia, Washington 98504-0600

Dear Representative Quall:

I am writing as chair of the Washington State Board of Health to comment on Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5889, which is scheduled for hearing tomorrow morning. Both ESSB 5889 and Second Substitute House Bill 2167 have the admirable goal of reducing administrative burdens on schools at a time when resources are scarce. However, ESSB 5889 would suspend visual and auditory screening until July 1, 2011 for those students who do not have special needs and are not on eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

The Board prefers the approach to screening taken in 2SHB 2167, which does not suspend visual and auditory screening for any group of students. This longstanding requirement is typically met with the help of volunteers and has been shown to identify vision and hearing problems that interfere with successful learning. Allowing such problems to go undetected even for two years could lead to significant and enduring academic setbacks for individual students.

Thank you for considering these concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Treuman Katz". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Treuman Katz
Chair

cc: House Committee on Education Members
The Honorable Marcie Maxwell, Washington House of Representatives
The Honorable Steve Hobbs, Washington Senate
Washington State Board of Health Members
Ms. Christina Hulet, Governor's Executive Policy Office
Ms. Judy Hartmann, Governor's Executive Policy Office
Mr. Bob Butts, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Mr. Brian Peyton, Department of Health
Mr. Craig McLaughlin, Washington State Board of Health