



June 13, 2018

The Honorable Benjamin Allen, Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Education
State Capitol, Room 2083
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1974 (Gonzalez Fletcher) Pupils: Collection of Debt
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Chair Allen,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports proposed legislation AB 1974 (Gonzalez Fletcher) to prohibit schools from taking action against students to collect a debt owed by the parents or from selling that debt or reporting the debt to a credit reporting agency.

In many school districts, families have been required to take on more of the costs of public education, yet not every family has the resources to absorb those costs. In an effort to collect debts, some schools have taken punitive actions against students such as withholding transcripts, banning participation in graduation ceremonies, or not allowing the student to participate in educational field trips. Other schools have used debt collectors which has proven to be ineffective as the costs of recouping a debt may end up exceeding the amount owed. These situations cause stress and embarrassment for the pupil and the family. AB 1974 (Gonzalez Fletcher) would protect children from toxic stress by keeping them out of the debt payment arrangements between their parents and the school.

The American Academy of Pediatrics believes that addressing the immediate needs of our youngest and poorest citizens is both the right thing to do for our children and an economically sound strategy for the future. Pediatrician members of AAP California Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide strongly support proposed legislation AB 1974 (Gonzalez Fletcher) and urge you to vote AYE. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: Members of the Senate Standing Committee on Education

Honorable Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher, Author
AAP-CA Leadership; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne