



April 4, 2018

Honorable Patrick O'Donnell
Chair, Assembly Education Committee
1020 N Street, Room 159
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 2289 (Weber): Pupil rights: pregnant and parenting pupils.
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Chair O'Donnell:

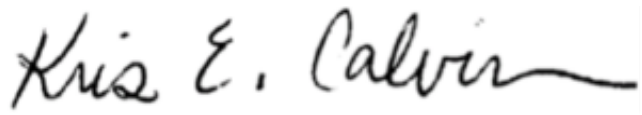
The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports proposed legislation AB 2289 (Weber), which would require school districts to extend pregnant and parenting pupils the right to parental leave and excused absences to care for sick children.

Fewer than half of adolescent girls who have a child before the age of 18 finish high school, despite the many advantages to both mother and child in doing so. One of the reasons for this is that it is extremely difficult to remain a student in a standard high school environment while pregnant or parenting. Children often get sick and need a parents' care, but a student's absences to care for a sick child typically go unexcused—leaving them at risk of truancy. Moreover, the lack of parental leave policies is very trying for both the parenting student—who loses crucial time to bond with her child—and the newborn. As stated in a 2015 AAP press release, when afforded leave after the birth of a child, “mothers breastfeed longer and parents are more likely to take children for immunizations and well-child care”; moreover, because of the developmental importance of parent-newborn bonding, “family leave can have effects that last throughout life.” But, lacking the right to family leave, teen parents are faced with a hard choice: either they drop out of school to care for their child, or stay in school while leaving the newborn with another caretaker. In either scenario, both newborn and parents face severe challenges.

AB 2289 (Weber) would ease the burden on teen parents and their children by affording pregnant students 6 to 8 weeks of leave, while also allowing a parenting student not giving birth up to 4 weeks of leave. Importantly, it would also permit parenting students up to 4 excused absences per year to care for a sick child.

Pediatrician members of AAP California Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 across the state respectfully urge an AYE vote on AB 2289 (Weber). Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris E. Calvin" with a long, sweeping underline.

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

cc: Assemblymember Shirley Weber, author
Members of the Assembly Education Committee
AAP-CA Leadership; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne