



March 10, 2017

The Honorable Marc Levine
State Capitol, Room 5135
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0010
Fax: (916) 319-2110

RE: AB 576 (Levine): Pupil discipline: Suspension and Expulsion
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Assemblymember Levine:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports your proposed legislation AB 576 (Levine). This bill would require that a school employee make a reasonable effort to contact a student's parent or guardian to advise them of an upcoming conference regarding their child's suspension, and requires that a teacher advise the parents or guardians of a student issued detention in lieu of suspension that the student may be considered for suspension in the future.

All children deserve a safe, supportive learning environment. While in rare occasions suspension may be necessary to reaching this goal, national AAP policy, based on a review of available research, holds that "out-of-school suspension and expulsion are counterproductive to the intended goals, rarely if ever are necessary, and should not be considered as appropriate discipline in any but the most extreme and dangerous circumstances, as determined on an individual basis rather than as a blanket policy" (March 2013). Any suspension should only be undertaken in consultation with the child's parent or guardian, both so that the student's family can help correct behavior disruptive to learning, and also so that teachers and administrators may be apprised of family stressors, unreported disabilities, or other potential causes of disruptive behavior that could illuminate the path forward.

AB 576 (Levine) would help ensure that all students receive the consideration they deserve by making sure families are advised of their child's misbehavior and the potential consequences thereof, and would allow families to communicate their concerns to their child's school before such a drastic and often destructive step is taken. We hope that this would, in turn, reduce the number of unnecessary school suspensions in California.

Pediatricians strongly support AB 576 (Levine). We thank you for your public service and for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'Z' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Zoey Goore, M.D., M.P.H., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Executive Board Member, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: Kris Calvin, CEO; AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne