



March 25, 2015

Assemblymember Bonilla California
State Capitol, Room 4140
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 63 (Bonilla): School Safety Programs
AAP-CA POSITION: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Bonilla,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California, representing the 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of all four California AAP regional chapters statewide (Ch 1 – Northern California, Ch 2 – Greater Los Angeles, Ch 3 – San Diego, and Ch 4 – Orange County), strongly supports your proposed legislation AB 63 (Bonilla). This bill would authorize the Superintendent to consult with the Board of State and Community Corrections, the State Department of Social Services, and the State Department of Public Health on school violence prevention and intervention in order to carry out one or more of the purposes of the programs established under the School Safety and Violence Prevention Strategy Program.

Youth violence is a clear problem with serious social, emotional, physical, and economic consequences. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, homicide and suicide remain the leading causes of death among youth aged 10 to 24. In addition, a recent study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development found that nearly 17 percent of school-aged children experience bullying. Nationally this equates to approximately 1.6 million children in grades 6 through 10 being bullied once a week and approximately 1.7 million children bullying other children.

Much of this violence is preventable with proven strategies focused on identifying high-risk individuals, providing early intervention, and supporting communities, families, and those who are exposed to violence or prone to violent behavior.

AB 63 attempts to re-establish these programs by creating a new source of funding derived from the sale of a specialized license plate. AB 63 will establish a unique license plate designed by the CDE and available for sale to the general public, drawing attention to the importance of addressing youth violence and bullying in California public schools. Pediatricians strongly support AB 63 and thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of children across California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Sarah Morgan
Policy Analyst
American Academy of Pediatrics, California District