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September 28, 2017

Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.  
California State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

AB 752 (Rubio): Child Care: State Preschool Programs: Expulsion  
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Governor Brown:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports the proposed legislation AB 752 (Rubio). This bill would establish a process modeled after the United States Department of Health and Human Services guidelines to prevent children from being unnecessarily expelled or unenrolled in the California State Preschool Program and other child and developmental care services.

Preschool expulsion is alarmingly frequent in California, with rates higher than the national average and a disproportionate effect on children of color, especially African-American boys. This has the twin effect of depriving children of much-needed, highly beneficial early education that helps children escape poverty, while at the same time teaching these children at an extremely young age that their presence is not valued or tolerated in educational environments. As stated by Dr. Peter A. Gorski, a member of the AAP Council on School Health Executive Committee, “the [expelled] child feels singled out, isolated and humiliated and grows to confirm a negative sense of self that he or she carries into subsequent interactions with the next school or next environment. That builds an expectation that ‘I will fail.’”

Of course, disruptive behavior need not be tolerated in a preschool environment, where all children should be able to feel safe. However, there are many proven ways to resolve and treat disruptive behavior that help the child in question learn and grow, rather than simply punishing them for acting out—frequently, as a result of home stresses, traumas, or undiagnosed behavioral issues they have not yet learned how to manage.

AB 752 (Rubio) would ensure that such methods are more broadly applied in California preschools by establishing a process modeled after federal guidelines, which recommend developing preventive guidance and discipline practices, strengthening family partnerships, investing in teacher/staff development, and establishing appropriate expulsion and suspension policies. These guidelines are themselves endorsed by the national American Academy of Pediatrics.

California pediatricians respectfully request that you sign AB 752 (Rubio) into law. We 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, appearing to read "Victor Perez".

Victor Perez, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
State Government Affairs Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

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