



March 27, 2017

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
State Capitol, Room 3086
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 651-4925

RE: SB 354 (Portantino): Special education: individualized education programs: translation services
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Senator Portantino:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, strongly supports your proposed legislation SB 354 (Portantino). This bill would require that local educational agencies provide parents, guardians and education rights holders with a copy of their student's IEP, translated into their native language by a certified translator, within 30 days of a request being made.

Nearly half of California children are from immigrant families, many of whom do not speak English at home, and nearly a quarter of California students are themselves English language learners. It can be extraordinarily difficult for non-English speakers to effectively communicate with their child's teachers without the assistance of a translator—and even more so when the subject is as complex as a special needs student's individualized educational program. This is not only distressing for many parents who wish to be involved in their child's education, but is also detrimental for the student, who may not be able to count on effective family support because of their parents' inability to coordinate with the student's teachers and school officials. For these students' sake, it is important that we give their parents the resources they need to help support their child's education. However, while current law requires a translation of IEP documents be given to the student's parents, the law does not stipulate a deadline and does not require the translations to be carried out by a certified translator—meaning that they can be delayed or of poor quality.

SB 354 (Portantino) would help our state's special needs children with non-English-speaking parents by requiring that these translations be carried out by a certified translator and delivered within 30 days of the request. Additionally, it would clarify that conservators and educational rights holders also have the right to these same privileges, so that these people who play such a crucial part in a child's life are not left in the dark simply because they do not read English proficiently.

Pediatricians strongly support SB 354 (Portantino). 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, appearing to read 'Susan Wu', located at the top left of the page.

Susan Wu, 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