



---

April 2, 2018

Honorable Nancy Skinner  
State Capitol, Room 2059  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 607 (Skinner): Pupil discipline: suspensions and expulsions: willful defiance**  
**AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Senator Skinner:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, supports your proposed legislation SB 607 (Skinner), which would make indefinite the prohibition on the suspension or recommendation for expulsion of any pupil in kindergarten through grade 5, and would prohibit until 2023 the suspension or recommendation for expulsion of any pupil in grades 6 through 12, for the reason of disrupting school activities or defying authority. It would also extend these regulations to include charter schools.

According to the AAP Policy Statement on Out-of-School Suspension and Expulsion, “The AAP maintains 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.” These circumstances clearly do not include simple disruptive behavior, which are best dealt with using in-school disciplinary action and counseling. Disruptive behavior in-school often is the result of difficulties at home which may not be apparent at first glance, and it is counterproductive to discipline the child by sending them back to the same, possibly hostile environment that is encouraging their acting-out. Moreover, research has demonstrated that students expelled from school are 10 times more likely to drop out of school before completing high school—an incredible loss whose effects are felt not only by the student in question, but by society as a whole.

SB 607 (Skinner) would reduce the burden on children and youth with difficult home environments and undiagnosed mental health and behavioral issues by barring the practice of out-of-school suspension and expulsion for the simple offenses of disruptive behavior or defiance of authority for our youngest children and temporarily ending it for older children and youth, thus encouraging alternate means of discipline.

Pediatrician members of AAP California Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 across the state strongly support your proposed legislation SB 607 (Skinner). Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

*Kris E. Calvin*

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

cc: AAP-CA Leadership; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne