

August 29, 2019

Senator Pat Bates
State Capitol, Room 3048
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 541 (Bates): School safety: lockdown drills.
AAP-CA Position: Oppose

Dear Senator Bates:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide, respectfully opposes your proposed legislation SB 541, which would require each California school, as specified, to conduct lockdown/multi-option response drills in grades kindergarten to 12th grade at least once every year.

Pediatricians share your concern for children's safety. With respect to guns, AAP-CA supports strong, evidence-based gun regulations that would keep guns out of the hands of those who would misuse them, as well as reduce the number of firearms in general circulation. As stated in AAP policy, "the most effective measure to prevent suicide, homicide, and unintentional firearm-related injuries to children and adolescents is the absence of guns from homes and communities" (*Firearm-Related Injuries Affecting the Pediatric Population*, Nov. 2012). We hope to work with you in the future on measures that would accomplish these goals. However, while we support emergency preparedness, the evidence is not there to conduct lockdown and multi-option response drills annually as a way to improve the safety of children, and there are legitimate concerns that such exercises may cause children undue psychological stress.

While your legislation asserts that the drills must be "age-appropriate", there is an insufficient evidence base to allow us to reliably design and implement such drills. Creating a statewide mandate for children as young as those in kindergarten to be put through lockdowns or multi-response drills year after year, absent that knowledge base, is premature at best.

Pediatricians across California, therefore, respectfully oppose your proposed legislation SB 541. We thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of the children, youth, and families of California, and hope to work with you again in the future.

Sincerely,



Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP-CA Leadership; AAPCA Advocate Lydia Bourne