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Class Size SB 2/ HB 7039

On behalf of The Florida PTA and its 350,000 plus members across the state we would like to offer our comments regarding SB2/HB7039, dealing with class size requirements.

PTA Position

PTA supports class size reduction proposals that consider actual class size, meaning the number of students in a teacher's room for whom that teacher is accountable, rather than pupil/teacher ratios, which do not accurately reflect teachers' contacts with children. The Florida PTA urges the legislature to fully fund the capital, personnel and operational cost necessary to decrease or maintain class sizes under the mandated levels.

As the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in this state, we speak for the children of Florida, who are yet to find their voices. The education of children is of primary importance to not only their future, but also that of the state.

We recognize the budgetary constraints surrounding the implementation of the class size amendment. We also however, recognize the importance of smaller classes in the successful education of all children.

Parents overwhelmingly want smaller classes for their children, but are not unreasonable in their expectations and will work with their schools and school districts to achieve the optimum numbers for the classroom.

In order to meet the needs of Florida's students without over burdening the system, we recommend that flexibility in implementing the class size amendment can be provided by amending the statute implementing the amendment without revoking the will of the people via a constitutional amendment.

Schools need relief prior to the start of the school year in 2010 and this measure will not be put to the test before November 2010. If this measure fails at the ballot box, we are left without any recourse or solutions by which to help our schools with the resources they need.

By working together with parents, educators and students, we can collectively address the barriers surrounding the implementation of this amendment and come up with practical solutions that will enhance the education of our children.

We look forward to working with you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Latha Krishnaiyer
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