

Senate Bill 1 Sparks Controversy

Legislators Work To Make Texas Schools The Best In U.S.



Lt. Governor Rick Perry

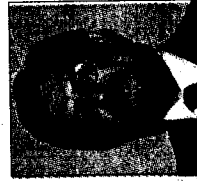
On February 18, 1999, the Texas Senate took a big step toward making Texas schools the best in America by passing Senate Bill 1, authored by Education Committee Chairman Teel Bivins (R-Amarillo), to effectively end social promotion in Texas.

Social promotion is the practice of advancing children from one grade to the next even though they have not mastered the skills and knowledge they need. Senate Bill 1 gives teachers the extra training and tools they need to identify and correct learning problems early in a child's school career.

In his State of the State address last month, Governor Bush said, "social promotion is the result of low hopes, low standards, and low expectations. You and I have high expectations for every child and we have high standards to match those high hopes."

By passing this important bill in a 31-0 vote, the Senate showed that Texans of both political parties and varying philosophies can come together and do what is best for the children of our state. SB1 is now under consideration in the Public Education Committee.

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Edward Rincón, Ph.D.

TAAS: The Case For Negligent Marketing

Negligent marketing is a term used to describe companies that act irresponsibly or recklessly in the sale of products whose use is known to create harm to persons. The best examples involve the successful litigation against the tobacco industry and, most recently, the finding that firearms manufacturers were legally liable for the deaths caused by their careless distribution of firearms.

A recently released study, initiated at the request of Congress, suggests that Texas legislators are coming dangerously close to developing their own form of negligent marketing by expanding the use of the TAAS despite overwhelming evidence about its detrimental effects on Hispanic and African-American public school students. A panel of experts representing the National Academy of Sciences summarized their extensive review of the relevant research in a report entitled High Stakes Testing for Tracking Promotion and Graduation (1999).

In regards to the practice of retaining students due to their inability to meet minimum standards as defined by tests like the TAAS, the panel found that retained children were generally worse off than their promoted counterparts on both personal adjustment

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