

Submitter: Paul Terdal
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure: SB819

Dear Chair Neron and members of the House Committee on Education,

Please support SB819, which would fix critical issues with abbreviated school day programs for students with disabilities.

I am the father of students with disabilities, and have served for more than a dozen years as a volunteer advocate for individuals with disabilities. I have worked with many parents, policy makers, and advocacy organizations to address and solve issues regarding disabilities rights in education and health care.

SB819 addresses critical inequities by ensuring that children with disabilities aren't "short changed" on their right to an education by being placed on an abbreviated school day program without parent consent.

This issue has been in litigation for many years – at great expense to all parties. The very fact of the litigation has also impacted students ability to access their education. I have even seen situations in which parents who WANTED a shortened school day were refused because their Districts feared litigation. In one of these cases, a child had been prescribed intensive outpatient treatment for a chronic health care condition, and couldn't participate in their full treatment program without taking substantial time off of school. The District refused the parents request for an abbreviated school day to undergo health care and told them that they would need to choose between attending school full time – and forgoing health care – or withdrawing from school altogether so that they would have time for their medical treatment.

SB819 would solve this problem by establishing a clear procedure and process to make decisions about abbreviated school days with parent consent.

Sincerely,

Paul Terdal
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