



NAACP
NEW ENGLAND AREA CONFERENCE

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June 11, 2015

Madam Chairs of the Joint Committee on Education and its Members

**Provided Below is Testimony in Support of a Moratorium on
High-stakes Testing in Massachusetts by Bills H.0340 and S.0294**

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the oldest and largest civil rights organization in the country. The NAACP continues its ardent work in the journey for justice in our democratic society. The New England Area Conference (NEAC) is the governing and coordinating entity for NAACP Branches in the states of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont. Relative to this hearing, NEAC speaks for all NAACP Branches in Massachusetts in addressing the inequity challenges in the Massachusetts School System.

NEAC has opposed High-stakes testing for many years. NEAC's concern is that these standardized tests do not provide an adequate measure of student achievement and teacher effectiveness. While the goals of the High-stakes testing have been laudable, the tests have actually missed the mark and have served to stymie student achievement. Also, the tests have failed to be a pathway for better teaching in the classroom. The focus on these tests has distracted us from the primary objective of our educational system -- to provide broad based education to meet the challenges of tomorrow. Bills H.0340 and S.0294 provide relief from the negative impact of these tests on our educational system while we refocus on educational achievement and the appropriate measurement thereof. There are different special considerations stated for requiring the testing moratorium in each bill and NEAC agrees with the reasons included in both.

In General

High-stakes testing is unfair to students in school districts which do not have adequate resources. We think that few would argue that educational resources differ significantly among Massachusetts school districts. Some are fortunate to have substantial resources and some school districts are not so fortunate. However, there is a corollary between adequate resources and effective educational achievement. So to hold students who have experienced inadequate instruction all along their public educational journey to a High-stakes, one size fits all test at the end of their educational journey is grossly unfair. We must search for more effective approaches to educational achievement so that all students can maximize their potential in our schools. Some believe PARCC is a better student evaluation approach, but it can be also implemented as a High-stakes testing system. Bills H.0340 and S.0294 will provide relief while we continue the search for the best approach to do the best job possible for our students and educators.

The New England Area Conference is the governing and coordinating entity for NAACP Branches, College Chapters, High School Chapters and Youth Councils in the states of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont.

Bills H.0340 and S.0294 Special Considerations

- Bill H.0340 requires a moratorium on high-stakes testing so that MCAS scores for teacher evaluations are not used. NEAC agrees with this requirement, because the pedagogy learning function does not always relate directly to evaluating student content retention. The evaluation of students does not directly equate with the teacher's performance in curriculum decomposition and classroom delivery. Data indicates that a key to educational achievement and instruction is availability of resources (i.e., poorer schools have poor learning performance, etc.).
- Bill S.0294 requires a moratorium on High-stakes testing to re-evaluate the way tests are narrowing the curriculum and excluding many central values of schooling. NEAC agrees that students are missing out on key subjects in learning because of the increased focus on only the narrow testing subjects.

The special considerations, of each of the moratoriums on High-stakes testing bills, have tremendous value to students and teachers.

Respectfully submitted,

Juan M. Cofield

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In consultation with:

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