



# CALIFORNIA SOCIETY OF PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

April 10, 2008

The Honorable Gene Mullin  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Education  
1020 N Street, Room 159  
Sacramento, California

**Re: AB 2890 (Duvall)**  
**Position: Oppose**

Dear Assembly Member Mullin:

The California Society of Pediatric Dentistry strongly opposes the passage of AB 2890, which would eliminate the provisions of Assembly Bill 1433, passed by the legislature in 2006, by which children entering public school receive an oral health assessment. These provisions, found in Section 49452.8 of the Education Code, aid in identifying children suffering from dental disease (dental decay and infection) that interferes with learning and school progress.

The *2004-05 Oral Health Needs Assessment Survey* of over 10,000 randomly-selected California kindergarten students conducted by the Dental Health Foundation found that over half had experienced tooth decay, more than one in four was in need of dental treatment, and most alarming, 4% were in need of urgent and immediate care because of dental pain or infection. With over 500,000 children enrolled in California kindergartens, more than 20,000 are in the classroom each day with pain or with an oral infection!

Youngsters with decaying teeth are often in pain, can't concentrate in school, miss school, suffer from poor nutrition because it hurts to eat, and are not school-ready or school-attentive. Some school districts in California report that half of all medically-related student absences are attributable to dental problems. Recent figures from the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health indicate students aged 5 – 17 lose an average of 1.3 days/100 students due to acute dental problems.

Section 49452.8 of the Education Code makes it more likely that debilitating dental conditions in young children are identified --- and treated --- earlier. **For this reason, we urge a no vote on AB 2890.**

Richard Udin  
President, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry

c: Members, Assembly Committee on Education  
Assembly Member Duvall  
Officers and Directors, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry  
Dr. Paul Reggiardo, Public Policy Advocate, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry  
Dr. Mel Rowan, Executive Director California Society of Pediatric Dentistry

The California Society of Pediatric Dentistry is the professional membership organization representing California's nearly 600 pediatric dental providers, educators and researchers. Our members provide primary and specialty care to infants, children, adolescents and patients with special medical and developmental needs. The mission of the California Society of Pediatric Dentistry is to advocate for optimal oral health and general welfare of infants, children, and adolescents.

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