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ASSEMBLYMEMBER SWANSON'S RACE TO THE TOP VOTE CALLS FOR PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST

Assemblymember Sandré R. Swanson (D-Alameda) voted against the double joined bills, SB5X 1 and SB5X 4, presented to the Legislature today, to compete for funds made available through the federal Race to the Top (RTTT) program.

Following his vote against the legislation, on the floor of the Assembly, Assemblymember Swanson stated, "I commend the Obama administration for their efforts to focus in on prioritizing education. I'm encouraging this house to vote this down and then vote up a clean bill that addresses the requirements of the application, and thereby support our children first."

When asked for further clarification, Assemblymember Swanson stated, "California is 46th in the nation in per-pupil expenditures. We need to start putting students first by making education a top priority in the state in a real way. These bills have the unintended consequences of harming our children in the long run," said Assemblymember Swanson.

In explaining his vote against the bill, Assemblymember Swanson said that "the legislation was not developed in a cooperative and democratic manner—the drafters excluded parents, school boards, and teachers in the drafting process. We need to always put the welfare of our children first," said Assemblymember Swanson.

"Part of the invitation from the Obama administration in the RTTT application process assumed the fostering of greater cooperation and participation in the education community. This legislation accomplishes the opposite. It is creating a lot of confusion and usurps authority from school boards and parents, which will lead to lawsuits instead of greater cooperation," continued Assemblymember Swanson.

"A fundamental flaw in the legislation will allow school districts to selectively pick the best performing students from lower-performing schools. This does not uplift California's school systems. It creates a fake and awkward system of scoring schools and an environment of abandonment to the schools and students in most need of our help," concluded Assemblymember Swanson.

The legislation must now be approved by the Senate and the Governor.

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