

May 17, 2007

Re: HB 3678

Dear Senate Committee on Education Members,

Because I consider myself to be a very spiritual person, and not a religious one, it is only proper to begin by stating the premise that *spirituality is the positive expression of our innate propensity to be "good."* There are things I *think* I know, and there are things I *know* I know. And this is something that I know I know.

Don't you think that closed-mindedness is such an undesirable trait? In the interest of the children of Texas, therefore, we should consider the locus of self-efficacy and self-esteem with regard to the issue laid-out before this committee in the consideration of the following 3 questions:

1. Would this piece of legislation—as it is currently sculpted—allow for equitable and qualitative opportunities for all children—those of both the majority and minority viewpoints?
2. Does HB 3678 both encourage and allow for the tenets of Cultural Competence to be nurtured in our youth? I believe that, as it currently exists, this Bill allows for the myopic views of the majority which, in turn, fuels groupthink and hinders critical and analytical thinking—skills in unquestionably critical need these days.
3. Does this Bill teach and help all children to believe in themselves or does it simply encourage them to hold on to the “stronger” and / or “strongest” of beliefs? Should HB 3678 encourage open and genuine dialogue so that the individual and more broad “spiritual” views are better understood, and therefore *respected* by others?

If our societal goal is to provide our children with the proper tools and wisdom so that one day they will seek other good people, raise good children of their own, and live good lives, then this Committee should sit down with those of strong and open hearts and minds—very much like the rabbi who testified earlier—to re-sculpt this Bill into a truly just one. If such a move only entails the deletion of section 25.152 and 25.156, then I believe it would be a great stride in teaching and modeling for the children the value we place in cultural competence.

I thank the committee—and the audience—for the opportunity to share with you my thoughts and sincerest of concerns. With kind regards, I remain,

Respectfully yours,



Michael Gutierrez