

Ladies and gentlemen of the committee:

My name is Santos Palomo, I am an 8th grade middle school mathematics teacher. I was born and reared in the Rio Grande Valley. I am a product of the public education school system and I am here with Valley Interfaith to share a story. This is the story of a 13 year old girl named Trixie who is an average student, very quiet and shy. Trixie is a hardworking young woman who is more than willing to do whatever it takes to pass. One morning she came into my class and wanted to share with me a dream she had the previous night. Trixie went on to state that she had been having nightmares for several weeks on a nightly occurrence. She then went on to describe in vivid detail what she had been experiencing. It horrified me. Trixie had a look of desperation and anxiety in her face as she recounted her nightmare. She hung her head low and her eyes started to water as she recounted her experience. Trixie explained to me that in this nightmare she had committed a horrible act. She had committed suicide by hanging herself all because she had not passed her TAKs tests.

This is an excellent example of how the TAKS test is effecting our students and has become a punitive measure. We are here today with Valley Interfaith because we believe that one test should not determine whether or not a student is promoted or determine if they graduate from High School. It should be diagnostic as it was first intended to be.

As an Educator I want to prepare my students to compete not only in the valley, state of Texas or the nation , but in a global economy.