

Good Morning. My name is Ed Ramos. I've taught elementary students for 20 years in San Antonio. Before teaching, I served as an officer in the US Air Force. But I also have 3 children in public school in SAISD, so I speak today as both a teacher and a parent. I'm here today to testify against the proposed changes in class size caps in Senate Bill 443.

Some superintendents and administrators will tell you class size doesn't matter—but I can tell you that it certainly does. I've taught classes from 28 to 14 students, and I know from experience that smaller classes mean less distractions and better learning. If you don't believe me, ask students, parents, or teachers. As far as I know, no group representing those groups wants to change class sizes. If we really believe in democracy, shouldn't that count for something?

Don't get me wrong. Great teachers get results—even with disadvantages—but it's like hunting deer with a .22 instead of a .306. You'll still get the job done, but it's harder, and a lot messier. Is that what we want for Texas? Most of you are parents—wouldn't you want your child in a room with less than 22 students, instead of a classroom crowded with 27, 28, or even 30 students?

Classrooms today are different another way from the over-crowded classes of 30 years ago. Today we have literacy centers, computers and media projectors, listening centers, science & math equipment, and manipulatives that didn't exist in the past. In many places, an extra 5 or 6 students would mean removing a center or two and having less space for each child. Simply put, more students means uncomfortable classes with less space for materials and equipment that's needed for a quality education.

Let me ask you this. If you were going to Disneyland, would you go in a Volkswagen Beetle, or an SUV? Both ways 'll get you there—but you'll get more from the trip if you aren't cramped. In education, we have a saying that 20 years from now, a student may not remember everything you taught, but they'll never forget the way you made them feel. Let's not make the kids of Texas feel like 2nd class citizens because we're too cheap to keep small classes. If we really want to attract out of state business, will overcrowding classes make us attractive? Really? What's the message we're sending? That we are willing to invest for the future—or that we're willing to sacrifice our children and the generations that come after us?

When I was a kid, we believed Texas could do anything. In Texas, we did things bigger, brighter, and grander than anywhere else. That dream is alive and well in the classrooms of our great state. Don't kill the dream by changing class size caps. If you increase class sizes, we may not feel it right away, but in a year or two it'll make a negative difference. So I ask you today—do the right thing for Texas—don't mess with class size caps!

Thank you, and God Bless Texas!