

Austin Independent School District

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House Bill 968 by Representative Mark Strama & Senator Kirk Watson

Relating to expulsion from school or placement in a disciplinary alternative education program for certain conduct.

May 17, 2011

Good morning, Madam Chair, members of the Committee, and Senator Watson, my name is Robert Schneider, and I am a member of the Austin ISD Board of Trustees. I am here on behalf of my school district to testify in support of House Bill 968.

We have three concerns about the current statute for aggravated robberies in the community:

- 1) Safety – aggravated robberies are serious offenses which involve either a weapon or serious bodily injury and should be treated as such.
- 2) Consistency – aggravated **assault**, which involves a weapon or serious bodily injury, requires a removal or allows for an expulsion. However, aggravated **robbery**, which is classified under property crimes in statute, but still includes a weapon or serious bodily injury, is subject to a different set of consequences. Logically speaking, parents, students, and school staff do not see a discernable difference between the two offenses which would merit the different treatment under the law. Both offenses should be treated in the same manner under the law and carry the same consequences.
- 3) Monitoring – School districts are under increased scrutiny for discretionary removals. It makes good sense for aggravated robbery to be a mandatory removal, like aggravated assault, so that it does not count against districts when it comes to discretionary removals. This will make data more meaningful.

HB 968 would help correct an inconsistency in the law, which simply doesn't make sense to school officials, parents, or students.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.