

House Bills 1285 and 1661  
House Education Committee  
Testimony 2/2/07  
Donna Christensen, Washington State PTA

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Representative Quall and members of the House Education Committee, I am Donna Christensen, lobbyist for the Washington State Parent Teacher Association (PTA). PTA President Linda Hanson sends her regrets.

I am here today to testify in support of House Bills 1285 and 1661.

HB 1285 simply makes good sense. Organizing state statutes in a way that provides greater clarity is logical and we support that change.

House Bill 1661 also makes good sense. The four scenarios would provide valuable information to the Legislature as it evaluates education budgets, particularly with respect to the current basic education definition.

However, it is important to note that the membership of the Washington State PTA chose as their number one priority for this session the goal to establish an updated definition of basic education and a basic education funding formula that reflects current education practices and requirements. The Governor, when addressing the Washington Learns report, talks about the goal of developing a world-class, learner-focused, seamless education system for our state. Our current basic education definition and funding will not get our students there. We must bring it up to date to reflect the needs of future, such as technology and world languages. The redefinition and funding formula must fulfill the State's obligation to fully fund education as its paramount duty by providing ample opportunities for all students to achieve higher learning levels consistent with standards-based education reform. The funding system must ensure accountability by generating consistent and transparent accounting processes.

We know this is not an easy process. But we are at a critical crossroads. To truly achieve a world-class education system we must have a basic education definition that reflects learning needs and full funding of that definition. For the future of all of us, our children deserve no less.

Thank you for allowing me to speak this afternoon. I would be happy to answer any questions.