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### Legislative Alerts and Updates

#### Congress:

- [Ask Your Representative to Co-Sponsor the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Investment Act of 2008 \(H.R. 5772\)](#)

#### State Legislative:

- [Massachusetts - Change the name of Department of Mental Retardation](#)
- [Massachusetts - Budget moves to Conference Committee](#)
- [Massachusetts - Support National Criminal Background Bill](#)
- [New Jersey - Community Provider Agencies Need a 3.6% Cost of Providing Care Increase](#)
- [Pennsylvania - Support Annual Funding Increases for MR System](#)
- [Pennsylvania - Support PA Budget Priorities Now](#)
- [Pennsylvania - Adult Protective Services Law & Funding Needed](#)
- [Pennsylvania - Support Pre-Trial Determination Legislation](#)
- [Tennessee - Funding Bill for Fulfill the Promise to be heard THIS WEEK](#)
- [Tennessee - SB 3126/HB 3297 Help Reduce the Waiting List](#)

#### Other:

- [Pennsylvania - Oppose Graduation Competency Assessment Regulations](#)
- [Tennessee - Action needed TODAY on the Fulfill the Promise Bill](#)
- [Indiana - 2008 Legislative Session Begins](#)

#### Smart Alert:

- [Support AB 2038 Lieber](#)



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**Action Alert****Oppose Graduation Competency Assessment  
Regulations****Proposed Rules Will Hurt Students With IEPs**

If adopted, new regulations proposed by the PA Board of Education in Harrisburg would prevent students from receiving high school diplomas unless they earn a "proficient" grade on 6 of 10 new standardized state tests. This new requirement would be so even if the student attended school for 12 years, completed all of their courses, passed all 12 grades, earned good grades on all of their research papers and projects, etc. These tests are called Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs) (also known as "high stakes" graduation).

For students with an IEP, the regulations would still require them to take the test, but it would exempt them from having to earn a "proficient" grade in order to graduate. Students in special education would be harmed because school resources would likely be diverted to the task of getting general education students prepared to score "proficient" on the standardized tests. (For illustration purposes, if a class has 20 general education students who will not graduate unless they score "proficient" and 5 students with IEPs who will graduate regardless of whether they score "proficient", then the pressure on teachers and school administrators will be very strong to focus most or all of their time and attention on the 20 general education students.

In addition, this new proposed regulation would very likely cause a flood of students attempting to get into special education as a way to avoid having to score a "proficient" in order to graduate. With the increased number of new special education students, time and resources focused on students who truly need special education services would be diverted and/or spread thin.

As an advocate for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, I want you to know that I oppose the proposed "graduation competency assessment" regulations.

For students with IEPs, the regulations require them to take the test, but the regs exempt them from having to earn a "proficient" grade in order to graduate. I believe that students in special education would be harmed because school resources would likely be diverted to prepare general education students for the tests. In addition, I fear the regulation would likely cause a flood of students attempting to get into special education as a way to avoid having to score a "proficient" on the test so that they could graduate. With the increased number of new special education students, time and resources would be diverted from the students who truly need special education services.

Instead of forcing the education system to dedicate more resources to more standardized testing, I believe some leadership ought to be exhibited by the State Board of Education to reverse Pennsylvania's dismal ranking of 48th when it comes to integrating students with disabilities with their peers without disabilities in general education in their neighborhood schools. Segregating children with disabilities more than almost every other state in the nation should not be a reality that is acceptable to the Board.

Thank you for listening.