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House of Representatives
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November 20, 2013

Silvan B. Lutkewitte, III, Chairman
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

RE: Objection to Regulation #6-326 Common Core Academic Standards

Dear Chairman Lutkewitte and Commission Members:

Section 4.3 defines the State Assessment as a valid and reliable measurement of student performance, specifically including the Keystone Exams. To be valid a test must measure as exactly as possible the item to be evaluated. To be reliable the same results must be obtained from every administration of the test. There are four components of the Algebra Keystone Exam which violate these rules. First, the performance levels have been lowered to below 60% on some algebra modules. Second, the test has incorporated subjective scoring on the constructed response questions which will greatly disadvantage urban youths. Third, the test discriminates by allowing upper income students to use expensive calculators, which may not be available to urban students creating an unfair playing field. Fourth, the standards provide for vague and unspecified extended exam times. Each of these regulatory failures indicates the Keystone Exam will not be valid and reliable and will lead to dislocation of resources and opportunities for urban and rural youth.

Each student has a right to a thorough and efficient system of public education, Article III, §14. Article I, §26 guarantees the Commonwealth will not discriminate against any student who exercises his right to a public education. These regulations unnecessarily limit choices of a full education by forcing urban and rural schools to use resources to pass a test that is neither valid nor reliable as an indicator of mathematical proficiency of Algebra 1 which will deny students the opportunity for higher math sciences and professional careers.

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Under these circumstances, and particularly in light of the Department of Education's refusal to provide recent performance results or cost data, these regulations should be stricken as not in the public interest.

Respectfully submitted,



BRAYN BARBIN
State Representative
71st Legislative District

BB:vlh
cc: Leslie S. Lewis Johnson, Esq.