

I strongly support SB 744.

Besides the burden that this mandated test places on students of color, low-income students and ELL students, there is a further pernicious effect that this test places on all students, including those who are academically successful in high school. The senior year in high school is often the time when students feel more empowered to take courses that interest them, courses that are taught by particular teachers who have a reputation for innovative curriculum, and classes in the performing and visual arts that enrich students' experiences at school. This is because, for many college-bound students, their junior year, along with previous years, are often filled with AP courses needed to compile resumes for college applications. The college-bound pressure to take AP coursework is itself often a barrier to student engagement as learners, but adding a senior test linked to graduation creates a further barrier to educational fulfillment for students. High school should be a time where students can continue to develop habits of learning, curiosity and agency that will sustain them throughout their lives – rather than play the role of anxious test-takers in the pursuit of achievement goals.

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