

Submitter: Anderson DuBoise

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1572

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the committee,

My name is Anderson DuBoise, Director of Strategic Initiatives for REAP, a youth leadership organization that centers youth voice. I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 1547. At REAP, we believe that education must be equitable and focused on student success. One of the ways we support this is through our in-school suspension program, Reflections. This program is designed to keep students in the learning environment while providing them with the support and reflection they need to succeed, rather than simply removing them from the classroom.

Opposition to this bill is important because:

-The Importance of Restorative Practices: Programs like Reflections show that when students are given the opportunity to reflect on their actions in a supportive environment, they are more likely to stay engaged with their education. Our programming has positively impacted discipline rates for the school while reengaging youth and families with the education system. Such a bill could fracture community and family relationships through a process that will not benefit student overall success.

-Impact on Student Success: SB 1547 threatens the progress we have made in creating inclusive school climates. We have seen firsthand how maintaining a supportive environment is critical for student well-being and academic achievement. The implementation of this bill without guidance and training could gravely negatively impact youth attendance goals for our state.

-Youth Voice: Decisions about school discipline must be informed by the students who live with these policies every day. Ignoring youth voices leads to student "check out" and a sense of being undervalued, which directly correlates with higher dropout rates and the school-to-prison pipeline. Without the unique perspective of students—especially those from marginalized communities—policies regarding "disruptive behavior" are highly susceptible to individual biases. Youth voice acts as a vital check on these biases, helping to uncover systemic inequities before they lead to the disproportionate exclusion of students of color and students with disabilities.

This issue is important now because students need stability and restorative support, like what we provide through Reflections, to thrive in their educational journeys. With all this being said, I urge you to vote against SB 1547.

Thank you for your time and for considering the perspective of REAP and the students we serve.

Sincerely,

Anderson DuBoise
Director of Strategic Initiatives