

Message - June 15, 2007

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EIGHTIETH TEXAS LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION:

Pursuant to Article IV, Sections 14 and 15 of the Texas Constitution, I, Rick Perry, Governor of Texas, do hereby disapprove and veto House Bill No. 2646 of the 80th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, due to the following objections:

The legislature appropriated \$148 million to the Educator Excellence Awards Program to reward teachers who improve student performance. The program requires that school districts use at least 60 percent of the funds to directly reward classroom teachers who effectively improve student performance. The remaining funds must be used only for certain purposes, including providing stipends to effective mentors and to teachers with proven records of improving student performance assigned to campuses having difficulty retaining teachers. House Bill No. 2646 would add to the list of allowable uses for these funds by amending the program to allow districts to provide stipends to classroom teachers who have obtained certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

By allowing stipends only for NBPTS certification, House Bill No. 2646 essentially is a vendor-specific bill that would put NBPTS at a distinct advantage over competing certification programs, including the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, which is currently under pilot and may soon be available in Texas. There is no reason to preference NBPTS certification over other worthwhile programs that recognize teachers who consistently improve student performance.

In addition, the state's significant investment in teacher incentives should be used toward fulfilling our goal of raising student achievement through supporting teacher participation in programs proven to have a real impact on teacher effectiveness.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have signed my name officially and caused the Seal of the State to be affixed hereto at Austin, this the 15th day of June, 2007.

RICK PERRY
Governor of Texas

ATTESTED BY:
ROGER WILLIAMS
Secretary of State