

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 Senate Bill No. 960 of the 80th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, due to the following objections:

Senate Bill No. 960 would exempt dependents of military personnel from passing the exit-level Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test if the students transfer into the Texas public school system after they complete their sophomore year in high school. Instead of taking the TAKS, the commissioner of education would determine appropriate performance levels on other nationally recognized norm-referenced assessment instruments in order to satisfy the graduation requirements and qualify for a Texas diploma.

The strength of our accountability system is derived from having a common standard for all students. Allowing exemptions from this standard decreases the value of a Texas diploma. And I believe all Texas students are capable of success.

Instead of singling out a particular group of students, I am directing the Texas Education Agency to study the challenges faced by transfer students and propose viable options to address this problem to the 81st Legislature.

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