

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 24

Introduced by Assembly Member Bonilla

January 24, 2012

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 24—Relative to the proposed federal Student-to-School Nurse Ratio Improvement Act of 2011.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 24, as introduced, Bonilla. Proposed federal Student-to-School Nurse Ratio Improvement Act of 2011.

This measure would urge the members of California’s congressional delegation to sign on as cosponsors of, and request that the Congress and the President of the United States enact, the proposed federal Student-to-School Nurse Ratio Improvement Act of 2011.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, The American Academy of Pediatrics emphasizes
2 the crucial role school nurses have in the seamless provision of
3 comprehensive health services to children and youth, as well as
4 in the development of a coordinated school health program; and
5 WHEREAS, The school nurse functions as a leader and the
6 coordinator of the school health services team, facilitating access
7 to a medical home for each child and supporting school
8 achievement; and
9 WHEREAS, The school nurse is often the only health care
10 provider that a child has and can ensure that basic health needs are
11 met; and
12 WHEREAS, Recent national data indicates 45 percent of public
13 schools have a school nurse all day, every day, while another 30

1 percent of schools have a school nurse who works part time in one
2 or more schools; and

3 WHEREAS, There is just one school nurse for every 4,000
4 pupils in California, which is well below the national standard of
5 one nurse for every 750 pupils. There are no school nurses at all
6 in 15 California counties; and

7 WHEREAS, The dearth of nurses has left many schools
8 struggling to cope with rising rates of childhood illnesses such as
9 asthma, food allergies, diabetes, and seizure disorders; and

10 WHEREAS, The American Nurses Association has reported
11 that, when there is no registered nurse on the school premises, the
12 responsibility to administer the necessary medications and
13 treatments, and to carry out appropriate monitoring of the children,
14 falls on the shoulders of administrators, educators, and staff, who
15 are ill-prepared to perform these tasks; and

16 WHEREAS, Statistics from the National Center for Education
17 Statistics indicate that, of the 52,000,000 children who currently
18 spend their day in schools, 16 percent have chronic physical,
19 emotional, or other health problems; and

20 WHEREAS, A recent study indicated that from 2002 to 2008,
21 inclusive, the percentage of children in special education with
22 health impairments, due to chronic or acute health problems,
23 increased 60 percent. Within this group the rate of autism has
24 doubled since 2002; and

25 WHEREAS, A 40-percent increase in asthma has been seen in
26 the past 10 years, along with a nearly 50-percent increase in the
27 incidence of diabetes in the same time period; and

28 WHEREAS, Nearly 10 percent of schoolage children in
29 California suffer from asthma; and

30 WHEREAS, According to the American Academy of Pediatrics,
31 students today face increased social issues as well as the need for
32 preventative services and interventions for acute and chronic health
33 issues; and

34 WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
35 report that the percentage of children without health insurance was
36 8.9 percent in 2008, and with over 1,300,000 homeless children
37 in the United States, schools have become the only source of health
38 care for many children and adolescents; and

39 WHEREAS, Communicable and infectious diseases account
40 for millions of school days lost each year. There is reported

1 evidence that school nurses have a positive impact on immunization
2 rates, with fewer parent-requested exemptions; and

3 WHEREAS, A recent study showed that students with health
4 concerns attended to by school nurses were able to return to class
5 95 percent of the time, while students attended to by unlicensed
6 staff were only able to return to class 82 percent of the time; and

7 WHEREAS, The presence of a school nurse leads to increases
8 in student attendance and the units of average daily attendance
9 that a school district may claim; and

10 WHEREAS, Using a formula-based approach for determining
11 a balanced student-to-school nurse ratio offers a reasonable means
12 for achieving better outcomes; and

13 WHEREAS, The federal Student-to-School Nurse Ratio
14 Improvement Act of 2011 (HR 2229) has been introduced in
15 Congress with the purpose of reducing the student-to-school nurse
16 ratio in public elementary schools and secondary schools; now,
17 therefore, be it

18 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
19 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature respectfully urges the
20 members of California’s congressional delegation to sign on as
21 cosponsors of the proposed federal Student-to-School Nurse Ratio
22 Improvement Act of 2011 (HR 2229); and be it further

23 *Resolved,* That the Legislature respectfully requests that the
24 Congress and the President of the United States enact the federal
25 Student-to-School Nurse Ratio Improvement Act of 2011 (HR
26 2229); and be it further

27 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
28 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
29 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
30 Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative
31 from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the
32 author for appropriate distribution.