

January 19, 2010

The Honorable Tom Torlakson
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 5160
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Concurrent Resolution 88 (Torlakson) - SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Torlakson:

On behalf of the California Healthcare Institute (CHI), whose more than 270 members include our state's premier biotechnology firms, medical device companies, pharmaceuticals, and academic research institutions, I am writing to support ACR 88. This resolution would establish the California Task Force on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Education in order to improve education in these areas across the state.

California's biomedical industry employs over 271,000 Californians with an average wage of \$75,000 per year. CHI's member companies are engaged in the research and development of ground breaking therapies that will hopefully lead to the next generation of cures for a host of life threatening conditions, including cancer, HIV/AIDS, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes and others. Our members know that our success is directly linked with the quality of STEM education in California's K-12 schools.

Biomedical research requires a well trained pool of world class scientists, mathematicians, statisticians, and engineers. Unfortunately, the quality of STEM education in the K-12 education system has been in decline for several decades in the United States, and U.S. students are being outpaced in standardized testing by their counterparts in the developed world. Without solid training in math and science disciplines, California's institutions of higher education will have fewer qualified applicants to our premier public education systems.

President Obama recently announced an objective called "Educate to Innovate" in order to spark interest with American students in math and science education. Part of this objective is the creation of a National Lab Day to be held in May 2010 to link K-12 educators with volunteer scientists, mathematicians, and other administrative personnel to create real-world laboratory experiences in classrooms around the country.

CHI strongly supports the Educate to Innovate program as well as National Lab Day. We feel that ACR 88 will provide an excellent vehicle at the state level to capture the myriad opportunities for improving STEM education. As such, we strongly support ACR 88. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandra Pizarro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sandra Pizarro
Vice President – State Government Affairs