

April 6, 2010

The Honorable Gloria Romero
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2090
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 1444 (Hancock) - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Romero:

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 SB 1444. This bill would define science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education as courses or a sequence of courses that prepare pupils for occupations and careers that require technically sophisticated skills, including the application of mathematical and scientific skills and concepts. Additionally, the bill establishes benchmarks for appropriate curricula for STEM education at various levels within the K-12 system.

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.

CHI has been a steadfast and consistent supporter of STEM initiatives in California's K-12 education system. President Obama recently announced an initiative 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 member companies are actively participating in this endeavor, and we have sponsored a resolution recognizing May 10, 2010 as California Lab Day (ACR 116 by Assembly Member Jerry Hill.)

CHI strongly supports SB 1444, the Educate to Innovate program, and National Lab Day. We feel that California must capitalize on the myriad opportunities for improving STEM education now, or risk compromising our position as the leader in the high-technology and biotechnology fields in the near future. 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

cc: Chair and Members, Senate Education Committee
Senate Republican Caucus