

## **Rep. Lynn Gattis**

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**From:** Judy Andree <jagster42@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 03, 2014 1:26 PM  
**To:** Rep. Lynn Gattis  
**Subject:** HB 220:Testimony

February 3, 2014

Dear Representative Gattis,

I am writing as someone with 20 years of experience in teaching at both the high school and college levels. I retired from UAS eight years ago as an associate professor in English. I have a Master's of Education and a Master's of English. I am also the grandmother of a young man who is still trying to pass the high school math exit exam. He will make his 11<sup>th</sup> try this spring; along the way he has taken a math computer class, at least two math classes focused strictly on passing the exit exam, and has had math tutoring. He received a Certificate of Achievement from his high school after completing all the required credits and passing both the writing and reading exit exams. I know of other students who face the same predicament and think we can do better for them.

I have been following SB111: a bill to eliminate the high school qualifying exam/exit exam. This bill is moving very rapidly through the Legislature, having already been passed out of the Senate Education Committee. Senate Education amended the bill to include a provision for those students caught in the net of the exit exam to continue trying to pass whichever exam they need until 2017. I am wondering why the repeal bill can't make the action retroactive instead. Allowing those who were unable to pass one or more of the exams, those who completed all the required coursework and earned the needed credits, to receive their diplomas and move on with their careers and lives seems to be the only fair and humane thing to do. Why hold these students to an exit requirement that no student before 2004 and after 2014 is required to meet?

The use of exit exams has had real life consequences for real individuals. Students who were on an IEP, as my grandson was, are particularly affected. There are many ways to assess student achievement, but a high stakes exam should not be one of them. Individual student skill growth is a better and more fair way of student assessment.

I am urging the House Education Committee to consider an amendment that would make this bill retroactive to allow students who have completed their course and credit requirements and who received a Certificate of Achievement to now receive their high school diploma. Now that the exit exam is being abolished, we should not hold one group of students forever in its grasp.

Respectfully,

Judith G. Andree

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