

SMART Act (H.R.408/S.197)



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The **Support Making Assessments Reliable and Timely Act, or SMART Act (HR 408/ S 197)** introduced by Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-Ore.) and Ryan Costello (R-Penn.) and Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.) and Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), is an NEA supported bill that would create a program to award grants to states to develop and administer state academic content and achievement standards and assessments of student progress toward those standards. This bill acknowledges that our current high-stakes testing system is completely broken and gives states the opportunity to evaluate the whole testing universe. Although the SMART Act is a great step forward and will make positive changes around the issue of assessment, we support additional types of flexibility around testing.

TOO MUCH TESTING

- ▶ No Child Left Behind **more than doubled** the number of high-stakes tests in reading and math—in these subjects alone, K-12 students now take 14 federally-mandated tests, compared to 6 before enactment of the law. This bill will provide a mechanism for improving testing and reducing duplicative and unnecessary testing. Reducing the number of duplicative and redundant tests would free up time and resources, diminish “teaching to the test,” and allow educators to focus on what is most important: instilling a love of learning in their students.
- ▶ **More than a month** of instructional time can be lost to test preparation and administration in a single year. (Source: [Testing More, Teaching Less](#), American Federation of Teachers, 2013)

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

- ▶ Parents and educators know that the one-size-fits-all annual federal testing structure has not worked and has not sufficiently exposed opportunity gaps where they exist. The chances for a child’s success should not depend on winning a charter lottery, affording private school, or living in the right zip code.
- ▶ So much happens at school that shapes our children’s tomorrows, and because of that, we must instill a love of learning, foster creativity, and teach critical thinking skills. Our students need curriculum standards that encourage critical thinking and creativity classrooms that emphasize curiosity and one-on-one instruction, rather than testing, to inspire students’ lifelong love of learning.
- ▶ The federal government must uphold its responsibility to ensure **equal educational opportunity**—the original focus of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
- ▶ **Less federally-mandated testing** would free up time and resources, diminish “teaching to the test,” and allow educators to focus on what is most important: instilling a love of learning in their students.