

Assembly Bill 2640

Compassionate Learning Advancement for Science Students (CLASS) Act Assemblymember Ash Kalra

SUMMARY

Assembly Bill (AB) 2640 would establish the Compassionate Learning Advancements for Science Students (CLASS) Act, which will empower students to be informed and have the choice to opt out of animal dissection projects. Students will be notified of their rights and receive information about the sourcing and chemical exposure to animal dissection. In addition, schools will be encouraged to phase out animal-based instruction and use alternative non-animal methods by 2028.

BACKGROUND

Learning about anatomy in schools is important in scientific pedagogy, and advancements in educational technology have expanded access to this critical scientific instruction without relying on animals. However, many schools still use animal dissection kits in classrooms.

Although California allows students to opt out of the animal dissection assignment, many are unaware of this option and feel obligated to participate in fear of this impacting their grades regardless of their deeply held ethical beliefs. Current law requires teachers to allow students to opt out of the dissection project and offer a comparable assignment. Students should be given an equal opportunity to achieve the same educational goal as their peers by receiving a comparable assignment and assessment as an alternative to animal dissection.

During the pandemic, schools had to quickly pivot to alternative teaching methods, which included remote or technology instruction materials like eMind and Visible Body. Because of this, schools are more equipped and prepared to use alternative methods, which can be more cost-effective for schools, help increase interest among students to participate in the project and provide a more humane way to reach the same educational outcome.

In addition, schools will be encouraged to phase out animal dissection to be more cost-effective and provide a more humane way to reach the same scientific educational outcome while affording students the same educational benefits.

SOLUTION

AB 2640, the CLASS Act will require teachers to provide students with a written notice to inform students of their right to opt out of animal dissection projects, where the animals are sourced from, and what chemicals they will be exposed to when participating in the assignment. Teachers must offer a comparable assignment, and their grades shall not be impacted by their choice to exercise their right to opt out.

SPONSORS

Social Compassion in Legislation (SCIL)
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)
Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM)

CONTACT

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