

Chair Blessing and Members of the Committee,

As a student, I'm constantly busy. It feels as if I'm always running out of time. Homework starts piling up, you're trying to get that one group project under control, trying to get those 6 permission slips signed; however, I wish these were the only problems taking up my time.

As a teenager, trying to grow up, fit in, and find my way often fills up the most space on my schedule, let alone family problems, self-consciousness, stress. When I come to school, despite all of the problems and stresses I face, I feel like I have the time and space to learn and explore. I feel like what I'm doing has a purpose.

This all starts to change when testing season arrives. School becomes draining, robotic, and overwhelming. I lose that time and space myself and others thrive in. Everything I do feels meaningless. Every day, I push myself to get up. Force myself out of bed, mentally prepare myself for what's to come. My classmates and I are met with lifelessness. We sit down in front of a screen for hours, knowing that what we're writing is going to be read and assessed by a robot. Knowing that what we're answering doesn't mean anything. In my case, I got a 5 on the ELA 1 test freshman year, yet I still had to sit through the ELA 2 test this year. I knew that the time I was giving was pointless. In these testing hours, I find myself slowly breaking down. I'm scared that all of this time, all of this work that I've put in, is going to be for nothing. No matter how much time and preparation I put in, my intelligence, my mind -- I --am reduced to a single number.

To be met with that reality time and time again is devastating. It's devastating knowing that the test your taking doesn't factor in your hard work. It's devastating knowing that the test you're taking doesn't consider what you're dealing with outside of school.

These tests don't do any good. They wrongfully evaluate what we're truly capable of. They rob us of the safe haven school can be. We are only met with more stress and unattainable standards, despite facing countless hardships outside of school.

That's why HB239 is so important. It reduces the actual time we spend taking these tests. It sheds light on how much time we're actually spending testing.

As a student, as a teenager, as a human, I want to be finding my way. I want to learn all that can. I want to grow up with skills and knowledge. This test doesn't help me or anyone else with that. I feel like I'm running out of time and all this test does is waste it. HB 239 does something about that.

Thank you.

Kallee Bernish-Good