



CALIFORNIA'S
COALITION
for ADEQUATE
SCHOOL HOUSING



AIA|CC
CALIFORNIA COUNCIL



April 7, 2010

The Honorable George Runner
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5097
Sacramento, CA 95814

**SENATE BILL 1227
OPPOSE**

Dear Senator Runner:

The signatories of this letter respectfully oppose SB 1227 which would transfer the duties of the Department of General Services (DGS) concerning design and construction of school buildings to local building departments.

The Field Act and Student Safety

The Field Act was enacted six weeks after the devastating earthquake in 1933, and has protected school children, teachers and school district staff ever since. By devolving the Division of the State Architect's (DSA's) oversight authority concerning school construction to local jurisdictions, SB 1227 would essentially dismantle the integrity of the Field Act and its long track record of protecting school children and staff. No child or adult has lost their life or been severely injured in California's schools since 1933. For this reason, the signatories of this letter strongly oppose this measure.

City and county planning agencies are not the appropriate place to review school planning, particularly the Field Act, because they do not possess the expertise or knowledge pertaining to the requirements of designing and building schools in California. Specifically, staffing, resources and technical qualifications can vary widely from local jurisdiction to local jurisdiction unlike the Division of the State Architect (DSA), which employs specially-trained engineers and architects to ensure that the necessary rigor and uniformity of standards for school buildings are maintained. As a result, we believe that the Field Act and school building codes would not be applied consistently from one local jurisdiction to another under this bill. In addition, school districts that cover more than one local jurisdiction will have to contend with multiple potentially inconsistent interpretations and application of school building requirements and Field Act provisions.

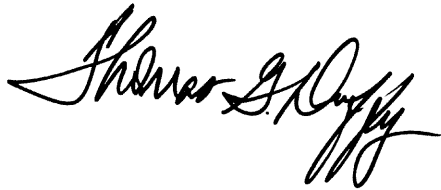
Negative Impact on Businesses

In addition to our concerns about the negative impact SB 1227 would have on the Field Act, this bill would also have a devastating impact on businesses that provide vital services to school districts. Specifically, the inconsistent application of standards that we believe would be the result of this bill creates significant uncertainty, not only for school districts, but also for architects, engineers, inspectors, relocatable manufacturers and other business stakeholders who are an integral part of building schools in California.


Finally, as a matter of public policy we believe that the Field Act's success achieved through stringent standards for plan approval, continuous inspection and materials testing has been a key element of student and teacher safety for over 75 years – we believe that SB 1227 would diminish the integrity of future schools built in our state. For this reason, we oppose SB 1227.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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Coalition for Adequate School Housing



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