



Testimony of

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On Behalf of the

American Industrial Hygiene Association® (AIHA)

Before the

Texas House Committee on Public Education

*In Support for H.B. 2010, Relating to providing workplace  
health and safety training information for use in the public  
school curriculum*

May 2, 2017

Good morning Chairman Huberty, Vice Chair Bernal, and members of the Committee. My name is Steven Lacey, I am the President of the American Industrial Hygiene Association<sup>®</sup> (AIHA), and am here to testify in support of House Bill 2010. I want to thank you, and the bill's sponsor, Representative Greg Bonnen, for the opportunity to address workplace health and safety training for young people – this legislation will help keep young Texans healthy and safe at work, and save the Texas economy millions of dollars associated with these preventable injuries.

AIHA is an over 75-year-old non-profit membership organization of 8,500 occupational and environmental health and safety professionals that work to keep people from getting sick, injured, or killed at work. AIHA's members protect worker health and communities by applying science to identify and solve health and safety problems. We help drive the economy by ensuring a healthy workforce. You will find our members in every workplace and industry imaginable, and we have a strong presence in Texas, with six Local Sections throughout the State.

Regarding this bill: we tell our children to not play with matches and to be careful around swimming pools as soon as they are old enough to understand the message, but we rarely say a word about how to stay safe and healthy when they get their

first job. Teens are twice as likely as adults to be injured at work. Since 80% of high school students work, this means each year nearly 60,000 teens end up in the emergency room with a workplace injury<sup>1</sup>. These injuries can permanently damage kids and their families, cost the US economy billions of dollars each year, and they are preventable. Your bill would help reduce these injuries by encouraging school districts to integrate a workplace safety program into school curricula, allowing us to start this conversation well before someone shows up to a jobsite.

Our association has taken steps with partners to create resources that schools may want to use. By example, AIHA worked with subject matter experts at the CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to develop a program called *Safety Matters*, which raises awareness among young people about workplace safety and health, and provides basic skills to contribute to a safe work environment. This program is free and no special training is needed to deliver it.

Similarly, NIOSH developed the *Youth@Work–Talking Safety Curriculum for Texas*<sup>2</sup>, also free and a more robust interactive program on the basics of job safety

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<sup>1</sup> American Industrial Hygiene Association. "Safety Matters Center". <https://www.aiha.org/get-involved/SafetyMattersCenter/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. "Youth@Work-Talking Safety Curriculum for Texas". <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/talkingsafety/states/tx/2015-158/default.html>.

and health, designed specifically for Texas. School districts may wish to use these existing resources.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2010.

AIHA and our members across the State hope to see this bill enacted into law before the State Legislature adjourns this year. Let's protect young Texans as they begin to work, help ensure their livelihood, and have a healthy workforce to drive this economy. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.