

SB 780 — 8:28

To: Senate Education Committee

From: Jennifer Fritsch, Thomson Gale (Jennifer.Fritsch@thomson.com)

RE: Testimony on SB ⁷⁸⁰~~708~~ by Senator Shapleigh, related to technology allotment

Testifying “on” the bill, with a requested amendment:

Chairman and members, my name is Jennifer Fritsch and I am with Thomson Gale. I am also the proud mother of two children attending public schools here in Texas. I’m pleased to be here today, and am testifying on SB ~~708~~⁷⁸⁰, to increase the per pupil amount of the technology allotment. It is overdue for an increase, and I appreciate Senator Shapleigh’s efforts to bring the per pupil technology allotment up to a more reasonable and appropriate amount.

I am also asking that you consider one change to the Senate bill: to set aside \$1 to \$2 dollars of the per student allotment to re-fund online library resources.

Online library resources, digital resources, and online databases, are actually educational databases comprised of vetted information and resources (including reference content, full-text magazines and newspapers, images, primary source documents, and scholarly journals). Independent of my employer, as a mom, I’ll emphasize that such resources permits students to access accurate, authoritative content, in a safe, password-protected environment.

From 2000 – 2003 - ALL Texas schools across the state had access to online resources funded by the technology allotment. It was called the Texas Library Connection.

This statewide delivery of resources allowed for an even playing field among students. I was fortunate to represent Thomson/Gale (one of the provider of these resources) and to see first-hand the impact on students all across Texas.

One of our main goals for students is college readiness and students are required to use these resources in higher education. Offering online library resources is critical to their future success.

Prior to being unfunded, the Texas Library Connection served 1000+ Texas school districts. Since the program was discontinued, only about 600 Texas school districts today have access to these resources.

The last point I’ll make is that having electronic resources available statewide, accessible from home and school, seems fundamental to all the good work this committee is seeking to do in regards to instructional, educational technology and transforming our schools to educate our 21st century learners....