



American Academy of Sleep Medicine

April 28, 2017

Representative Zoe Lofgren
1401 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
SENT VIA EMAIL: Angela.Ebner@mail.house.gov

RE: AASM support for “ZZZ’s to A’s Act”

Dear Representative Lofgren:

On behalf of the board of directors of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM), I am writing to express our strong support for the “ZZZ’s to A’s Act,” which you have reintroduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. As the leader in the field of sleep medicine, the AASM represents a combined membership of 10,000 accredited member sleep centers and individual members, including physicians, scientists and other health care professionals.

The AASM recommends that teenagers 13 to 18 years of age should sleep 8 to 10 hours on a regular basis to promote optimal health. However, CDC data show that 68.4 percent of high school students report sleeping 7 hours or less on school nights. Early middle school and high school start times work contrary to adolescent circadian physiology and truncate students’ sleep opportunity, resulting in chronic sleep loss.

Studies show that short sleep in adolescents is associated with poor school performance, obesity, increased depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation and risk-taking behaviors. Insufficient sleep also is associated with an increased risk of motor vehicle accidents, which account for 35 percent of all deaths and 73 percent of deaths from unintentional injury in teenagers. Research suggests that later school start times are associated with longer weekday sleep durations, reduced vehicular accident rates, and reduced subjective daytime sleepiness.

The AASM recently published a position statement encouraging primary academic institutions, school boards, parents, and policy makers to raise public awareness to promote a national standard of middle school and high school start times of 8:30 a.m. or later. (See attachment.) Therefore, we support your bill to direct the Secretary of Education to conduct a study to determine the relationship between school start times and adolescent health, well-being, and performance.

Sincerely,
Ronald D. Chervin, MD, MS
President

Attachment (1)

cc: Jerome Barrett, AASM Executive Director
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