



Senator Allen Introduces the Theatre and Dance Act

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Sacramento, CA – Senator Ben Allen (D – Santa Monica), chair of the Joint Committee on the Arts, introduced legislation today to establish single-subject teaching credentials for dance and theatre.

“California is the arts and entertainment capital of the world, and it is fitting that we recognize the importance of dance and theatre as vital elements of our arts curriculum,” Allen said. “How is it possible that ours is one of only two states in the country that does not have specific credentials for dance or theatre?” he added.

The legislation, Senate Bill 916 – the Theatre and Dance Act (TADA!) – was proposed in response to concerns raised at a hearing of the Joint Committee on the Arts held last fall on the status of visual and performing arts in schools. A variety of stakeholders from the arts community raised concern about the lack of stand-alone credentials for dance and theatre. Under the current system, persons who major in dance as an undergraduate can only teach dance after obtaining a credential in Physical Education. A theatre undergraduate major can only teach theatre after receiving an English credential. Advocates pointed out that the standards needed to teach dance or theatre are quite different from those of Physical Education or English.

Dance and theatre undergraduate majors are prevalent in California, with 73 public and private colleges and universities offering dance majors, and 131 colleges offering theatre majors.

“To tell people who have earned a degree in dance or theatre that they can’t teach in their respective fields unless they get a credential in PE or English is a disservice to them as teachers, to their students and the subject matter,” Allen said.

SB 916 is coauthored by Senator Robert Hertzberg (D – Van Nuys) and Senator Jean Fuller, (R - Bakersfield). Senator Allen announced the legislation at a Sacramento press conference flanked by supporters of the bill including Senator Robert Hertzberg, Joe Landon with the California Alliance for Arts Education (sponsor), Nancy Ng, with the California Dance Education Association, Carol Hovey of the California Educational Theatre Association, Brad Erickson with Theatre Bay Area, Carl Shafer, Arts Education Consultant, Ginger Fox, Arts Education Caucus Chair of the California Teachers Association, and Ron Rapp with the California Federation of Teachers.

