

By Senator Torres

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1 Senate Resolution

2 A resolution recognizing August 2017 as "School  
3 Backpack Awareness Month" in Florida.

4  
5 WHEREAS, overloaded school backpacks are increasingly  
6 becoming a serious health risk for students nationwide, and

7 WHEREAS, because a child's spinal ligaments and muscles are  
8 not fully developed until after the child attains 16 years of  
9 age, overloaded school backpacks are a source of repeated low-  
10 level stress that may result in chronic neck, shoulder, or back  
11 pain in children, and

12 WHEREAS, according to the United States Consumer Product  
13 Safety Commission, more than 7,000 emergency room visits each  
14 year are due to school-backpack-related injuries, and

15 WHEREAS, in 2010 alone, physicians' offices, clinics, and  
16 hospital emergency rooms in the United States treated nearly  
17 28,000 strains, sprains, dislocations, and fractures resulting  
18 from improperly worn or overloaded school backpacks, and

19 WHEREAS, studies have shown heavy loads carried on the back  
20 have the potential to damage the soft tissues of the shoulder,  
21 causing microstructural damage to the nerves and damage to  
22 internal organs, and

23 WHEREAS, studies have shown an increase in curvatures of  
24 the spine and compressed intervertebral height when a school  
25 backpack exceeds 10 percent of a child's body weight, and

26 WHEREAS, more than 90 percent of students carry school  
27 backpacks, which studies have found to weigh as much as 25  
28 percent of the child's body weight, and

29 WHEREAS, the 2010 Global Burden of Disease Study showed

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30 low-back pain as the number one cause of disability worldwide,  
31 while musculoskeletal disorders were the second cause, and

32 WHEREAS, children's textbooks are much heavier now than  
33 they were many years ago and, in addition to textbooks, students  
34 often carry computers, cell phones, water bottles, running  
35 shoes, band instruments, and other equipment, and

36 WHEREAS, school backpacks are often worn incorrectly,  
37 increasing the weight on the shoulders and forcing the child to  
38 lean forward when walking or stoop forward when standing to  
39 compensate for the extra weight, NOW, THEREFORE,

40  
41 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

42  
43 That August 2017 is recognized as "School Backpack  
44 Awareness Month" in Florida to promote awareness of the  
45 potentially serious and damaging long-term health effects of  
46 carrying overloaded or improperly worn school backpacks.

47 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in collaboration with  
48 community-based organizations and parent-teacher associations,  
49 school districts statewide are encouraged to educate students,  
50 parents, and school personnel regarding the health risks of  
51 wearing an overloaded school backpack and the ways in which  
52 students may properly load and wear their school backpacks.