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Rep. Valdés' Student Achievement Bill Passes the House Floor Unanimously

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Representative Susan Valdés' (D-Tampa) legislation ([CS/CS/HB 537](#)) to repeal the certificate of completion, as well as establish a music-based supplemental pilot program to support STEM courses for middle school students passed the House floor unanimously.

The Certificate of Completion is awarded when a high school student fails to earn a passing score on a state required exam needed for graduation or fail to achieve a 2.0 grade point average. The Certificate of Completion provides no pathways for students to apply to college, technical school, the military, and the FAFSA. This bill will erase the option for a student to earn a Certificate of Completion, but still allow for the student to stay in school for an extra year to satisfy their requirements and earn a high school diploma.

“We invest over \$100,000 into each child as they go through their 12 years of education. For them to walk across the stage at graduation, only to receive a Certificate of Completion, it’s really disheartening. The Certificate of Completion is one-way ticket to jail,” said **Representative Valdés**. “Expanding the music education pilot program to middle schools was an important component to the bill, as music has been proven to enhance student development. This bill passed unanimously because we in the Florida House know that the Certificate of Completion does not set our students on a path for a successful future.”

CS/CS/HB 537 is now in Senate Messages, where it is waiting to be heard in the Senate. The Senate companion bill is sponsored by **Senator Danny Burgess (R-Zephyrhills)**.

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