

NAADAC speaks out against Court's approval of random drug tests for public school students

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NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals, spoke out today against the Supreme Court's approval of random drug tests for public school students who participate in extracurricular activities. NAADAC believes the court's decision supports misguided and ineffective efforts to address drug use.

"Protecting America's youth from alcohol and drugs requires more than a simple drug test," said Bill B. Burnett, president of NAADAC. "We need a greater commitment to prevention and treatment."

The Pottawatomie County (Okla.) school system argued before the court that drug tests were a deterrent for students who knew that they could not participate in their favorite activities if they tested positive for drugs.

"Denying students access to extracurricular activities is not helpful," said Burnett. "At-risk and marginal students need the support systems and mentoring relationships that extracurricular activities provide. Excluding students who test positive for drugs will likely exacerbate their problems. Other students may avoid extracurricular activities altogether, making it difficult to identify and address their potential problems."

A 1995 study conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services revealed that students who participate in extracurricular activities are less likely to engage in risky behavior, including drug use. The study, "Adolescent Time Use, Risky Behavior Outcomes: An Analysis of National Data," was prepared by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.