

My name is Margo Williams and I have two daughters at TC. I am here today to advocate for more honors options for juniors and seniors, particularly history, English, and certain sciences. I have a very stressed out junior who is taking 3 AP classes – AP US History, AP English, and AP Biology – or that’s 4 APs if you count the AP Biology Lab. She would be here tonight to testify herself but frankly she has too much AP homework to be here. She is an excellent student and aiming for a great as-yet-to-be-determined college of her choice. But as we’ve learned in our college visits thus far, colleges expect students to “challenge” themselves as much as possible and in order to “challenge” herself, without honors English and history, she was forced to take more AP classes than perhaps she might have chosen.

For example, history is not her thing but for an advanced diploma she has to take 4 history classes. By junior year her only choices are AP, DE, or regular. She’s afraid the regular history class will be too easy and/or that colleges will perceive her as not challenging herself enough. But taking 4 AP courses is akin to taking 4 college courses PLUS her pre-calculus, music, the required finance course, and other extracurricular activities needed to fill up her resume. She didn’t have room for a language this year, but AP would have been her only choice and 5 AP classes was too much stress for a 16-year-old.

This is going to be an even bigger problem for my current 9th grader who struggles with reading let alone the large amounts required in the AP history and English classes. But again, when faced with AP vs. regular classes, she may be pushed beyond her comfort level. Pushing yourself hard isn’t

necessarily a bad thing but to the extent that our kids' physical and mental health are affected, that's NOT a good thing. We'll end up with a population of millennials taxing the healthcare system with stress related disorders, but that's a topic for another day....

One more point: I know it looks good to have lots of students in the AP classes – and I'm proud of TC's recent recognition by the College Board in its AP successes and applaud Mrs. Maxey for her work in this area – but it's my understanding that many of this year's AP classes are quite large, making it harder on the teachers to provide support. Having honors classes would allow the distribution of the students perhaps more evenly. I don't know this for sure but I would think that additional teachers would not be needed, just reassignment of their course load.

So I ask – is the stress to our children really worth it? Please add in more honors level English, History, and science courses for our juniors and seniors. Thank you.