

Honolulu, Hawaii
Feb 8, 2006

RE: H.B. No. 1839
H.D. 1

Honorable Calvin K.Y. Say
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2006
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred H.B. No. 1839 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that every blind or visually-impaired child is instructed in braille, if deemed appropriate to the child's current and future needs, by:

- (1) Establishing standards of braille proficiency and instruction;
- (2) Requiring materials to be provided in a computer-accessible format capable of braille reproduction; and
- (3) Requiring the certification and recertification of teachers in accordance with braille literacy standards.

The Ho'opono Advisory Board and many concerned individuals testified in support of this measure. The Honolulu Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii supported this measure with amendments. The Department of Education and Disability and Communication Access Board supported the intent of this measure.

Your Committee has amended this bill by:



- (1) Clarifying that when a decision is made not to incorporate braille instruction into a child's individualized education program (IEP), a statement should be provided that the decision was reached based on a review of pertinent assessments rather than a review of pertinent literature;
- (2) Removing the requirement that a child's IEP include the length of the period of instruction and the frequency and duration of each instruction session, because braille instruction is infused within the regular education curriculum throughout the student's school day, so only a record of the braille instruction services provided is needed;
- (3) Deleting the specification that all publishers of instructional materials sold to the State or any local education agency furnish an electronic version, because the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard initiative already addresses this;
- (4) Removing the requirement that applicants for certification in the instruction of blind and visually impaired children demonstrate competence in reading and writing braille as part of the certification and renewal process conducted by the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1839, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1839, H.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Finance.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Education,



ROY TAKUMI, Chair



