

MAR 14 2007

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UNDERTAKE A STUDY TO
DETERMINE THE NEED FOR AN OMBUDSMAN AT EACH OF THE PUBLIC
SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

1 WHEREAS, when people have a concern or are in need of
2 information, they do not know where to start and are often
3 frustrated and angry at being referred from one person to
4 another and often reaching voicemail or having to simply leave
5 messages which may not be returned for a long period of time;
6 and

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8 WHEREAS, serious issues and problems can be lessened or
9 avoided with more timely and direct responses; and

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11 WHEREAS, the Department of Education has undertaken Project
12 Aloha, a program to increase customer service in schools and in
13 state and district education offices; and

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15 WHEREAS, ombudsmen in government agencies are charged with
16 being a one-stop contact for community concerns and questions;
17 and

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19 WHEREAS, ombudsmen will do the more time consuming
20 contacting, facilitating, tracking, and follow-up on community
21 concerns and questions; now, therefore,

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23 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth
24 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2007,
25 that the Department of Education is requested to undertake a
26 study to determine the need for ombudsmen who would be
27 responsible for fielding and following-up on community concerns
28 and questions; and

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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that data in the study shall include
31 the following:

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33 (1) The number of concerns fielded and hours spent by the
34 Ombudsman of the Board of Education;
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(2) Data from schools and complex area superintendents' offices on the number of concerns and questions the administrative staff fields that require referral to another person or office;

(3) The results of a pilot project conducted in a small number of volunteer schools, among one district or one complex area, where an ombudsman is temporarily appointed and widely and constantly advertised; and

(4) Recommendations on whether an ombudsman in each district would be useful, effective, and need to be full-time or part-time; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is requested to submit its report and any findings and recommendations to this body not later than twenty days prior to the convening of the 2008 Regular Session; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Chair of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Education.

OFFERED BY:

Norman Sakuma

