

LATE TESTIMONY

March 28, 2008

To: The Honorable Representative Roy M. Takumi, Chair
The Honorable Representative Lyla B. Berg, Ph.D., Vice Chair
Committee on Education

From: Annette Stefaniak, Teacher
Mauka Lani Elementary (currently on maternity leave)

Subject: House Concurrent Resolution 290 & House Resolution 242 -
Requesting the Department of Education to establish a debit card
system pilot project for purchasing school supplies.

I submit testimony in **strong support** of House Concurrent Resolution 290 & House Resolution 242.

The time has come to give teachers the choice of where and how they need to spend their allotted funds for classroom supplies. It is our responsibility as the State of Hawaii to prepare each child to succeed in today's society and work force, and being technology proficient and innovative are important in achieving this goal. I believe a debit card pilot program for public school teachers will enhance education:

- **Creative curriculum.** Every child is unique and has different learning skills and needs. One size doesn't fit all. Debit cards liberate teachers to be free in their way of reaching children. Elements of innovation are a must in a classroom.
- **Flexibility.** Debit cards give teachers the freedom to go to different providers of supplies, rather than the restricted options of vendors that appear on the supply list. At times certain vendors do not have the needed supplies or they are less expensive elsewhere. A debt card would ensure that teachers could get the needed supplies in a timely manner. Teachers come across situations in which they have limited tools and not all events can be foreseen. Flexibility in curriculum is essential.
- **Enhanced Transparency.** Debit cards provide a current way for principals, administration and taxpayers to track and ensure teachers' spending. Debit cards would also eliminate the need for teachers to spend their time filling out detailed forms for classroom orders so they can focus more on the curriculum and the students.

- **Relationships.** Debit cards encourage a relationship between businesses in a school's community and the school. As members of an Island State, relationships help us succeed and contribute to the success of a community as a whole. When we reach out to the "Mom and Pop" stores within a community, they will be more inclined to support and get involved with the school in the future. Community relationships will strengthen with a debit card program, as well as boost morale and serve as an appealing tool to recruit teachers.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify and I ask for your favorable consideration of these measures. Mahalo for your time.

March 28, 2008

To: The Honorable Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
The Honorable Representative Lyla Berg, Vice Chair
Committee on Education

From: Corinne W. L. Ching

Subject: House Concurrent Resolution 290 and House Resolution 242 - Relating to the establishment of a debit card pilot program, **in strong support**

Providing purchasing power at the classroom level through the debit cards will help address the supplies problem. The time has come to give teachers the choice of where and how they need to spend their allotted funds for classroom supplies. It is our responsibility as the State of Hawaii to prepare each child to succeed in today's society and work force. This pilot program would allow the State sufficient time to study the effectiveness of debit cards in our schools and make adjustments to the program, as needed.

Debit card systems, by allowing teachers to make specific purchases within a set dollar limit, would help to:

- (1) Streamline the process for purchasing school and curriculum support supplies by shortening the wait time between ordering and obtaining a product and by eliminating the time lag for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses; and
- (2) Provide teachers with flexibility for their purchases, which would allow them to take advantage of school discounts and sales in the community; and
- (3) Provide up-to-date spending information that may be easily monitored and reviewed by principals, administration and taxpayers to track and ensure teachers' spending, ensuring transparency

Every child is unique and has different learning skills and needs and one size doesn't fit all. Debit cards liberate teachers to be free in their way of reaching children. Elements of innovation are a must in a classroom, and debit cards provide teachers with a means to achieve creativity in their curriculums.

Lastly, debit cards encourage, foster, and nurture relationships between businesses in a school's community and the school. As members of an Island State, relationships help us succeed and contribute to the success of a community as a whole. When we reach out to the "Mom and Pop" stores within a community, they will be more inclined to support and get involved with the school in the future. Community relationships will strengthen with a debit card program, as well as boost morale and serve as an appealing tool to recruit teachers.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify and I ask for your favorable consideration of this measure.