



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF HAWAII

February 7, 2008

Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Jill N. Sokuda, Vice-Chair
Education Committee

L A T E

S.B.2690

February 8, 1:15 PM, Room 225

The League of Women Voters is strongly in favor of S.B. 2690. Since the case for small schools is unusually strongly backed by research, and the establishment of schools-within-schools is the only way to make small schools financially feasible, we think this bill represents a very good idea. We are also pleased to see that it is a proposal that will prove especially good for minority students and students from low income families. There is yet another feature that very strongly recommends this bill: it is that it spells out the features that experience shows must be reflected in a proposed school-within-a-school if it is to show much promise. In other words, the bill would require those proposing a new academy or SWAS, as they are often called, to incorporate those features research has shown fundamental to making them succeed.

There are, however, a couple of things that got left out and that we would like to urge be added to S.B. 2690. The first involves teachers. It is just as important that teachers choose their SWAS as that students and their families do so. Finally each SWAS needs to meet weekly for more than self-governance meetings, in order to build and sustain community.

With these changes, this bill would avoid the fate that has befallen so many educational reform efforts in Hawaii and elsewhere -- in which the way they are implemented defeats the very purposes to which they are adopted.

Please pass this bill, but with the changes urged here.

Mary Anne Raywid
Mary Anne Raywid, Co-Chair
Education