

L A T E



February 6, 2008

PLEASE DELIVER
SEN CPH COMMITTEE
Wed.
2/6/08
1:15pm
Room 225

To: Sen. David Ige, Chair
Sen. Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair
Senate Health Committee

From: Cynthia J. Goto, M.D., President
Linda Rasmussen, M.D., Legislative Co-Chair
Philip Hellreich, M.D., Legislative Co-Chair
Paula Arcena, Executive Director
Dick Botti, Government Affairs Liaison

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Re: SB2701 Relating to Student Health (Requires each student to have a vision evaluation done by an ophthalmologist, physician, optometrist, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse 6 months before entering the beginning grade of any school in the State, at parents' cost. Gives parents right to refuse examination.)

The Hawaii Medical Association strongly opposes SB2701.

Vision evaluations are already part of physical exams required for school entry. Attached is the form each student is must submit showing they have undergone the required exams, including a vision evaluation.

This bill is unnecessary and creates an additional burden of time and expense for families. This burden is greater for families with more than one school aged child.

Unimpaired vision is vital to a student's ability to learn and succeed in school. The HMA supports vision screenings that help to identify and address the vision problems of children.

We urge you to hold this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

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EMERGENCIES, CALL: (808) 988-2188

Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair, Senate Committee on Health
Senator David Ige, Chair, Senate Committee on Education

L A T E

RE: SB 2701 Relating to student health

Dear Senators Sakamoto, Ige, and the members of the Education and Health Committee:

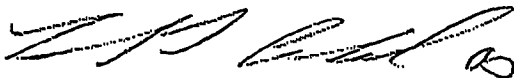
My name is Dr. Linda Arakaki. As the Immediate Past President of the Hawaii Optometric Association and Chair of the Hawaii Infant See Program, I have always been an advocate of providing the best in vision care to all of my patients but most especially to the children in my practice. I am writing to you to express my support for SB2701 which requires a vision evaluation for any student entering the school system.

Because 80% of all learning during a child's first 12 years of life comes through vision, healthy eyes and normal vision development are important factors that may determine a child's success in school. Undiagnosed vision problems can lead to reading difficulties, which then may lead to learning problems. By having a child's eyes and vision properly evaluated and treated if necessary early on in life, such problems can be avoided.

Currently, Hawaii is only one of 10 states that have no vision screening or vision exam requirements. If vision problems can be diagnosed and treated early in life, a child will have a better quality of life and learning experience. Many tax dollars are spent trying to fix a problem that could have been prevented by a simple eye and vision evaluation early in a child's development.

I ask for your support for this very important issue regarding the education and health of the children of Hawaii.

Sincerely,



Linda T. Arakaki, O.D., F.A.A.O.
Immediate Past President, Hawaii Optometric Association