

Date of Hearing: February 12, 2008

Committee: Senate Economic
Development and Taxation

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. No. 2853, Relating to Science and Technology Initiatives

Purpose: Amends Act 213, SLH 2007, to amend section 70 to appropriate additional moneys in fiscal year 2008-2009 for the Hawaii Academy of Science, to assist the organization in the administration and operations of all its current and future interscholastic academic programs, including outreach and training programs.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (DOE) supports this Bill, but requests the Legislature to consider amending Section 70 to read "Provided that of the general fund appropriation for school-based budgeting (EDN 100), the sum of \$250,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2007-2008 and the sum of \$250,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 shall be expended by the department of education for the purpose of contracting the Hawaii Academy of Science to administer and operate the State of Hawaii Science and Engineering Fair, the Pacific Symposium and the Hawaii Technology Education Association Fair and provided that any unexpended funds shall lapse to the general fund." The DOE supports the State Science and Engineering Fair and the intent of the academy to provide students with an opportunity to showcase the work of our

public schools in science and engineering activities. However, should the legislature consider funding this Bill, it should not replace the current Board of Education's budget priorities.

From: Kiani A.J. Arkus [<mailto:kiani.arkus@duke.edu>]
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2008 8:34 AM
To: Sen. Carol Fukunaga; Sen. Norman Sakamoto
Subject: SB 2853 (Hawaii Academy of Science)

Senators Fukunaga and Sakamoto,

It has come to my attention that there is currently a bill in the Senate and House regarding the Hawaii Academy of Science and their Hawaii State Science and Engineering Fair. This is a subject of deep concern to me.

My name is Kiani Arkus. I am a 2003 graduate of Kamehameha Schools. Furthermore, I competed in science fair for all four years of high school. I was privileged to have placed in the top three at the state science fair each time I competed. The Hawaii Academy of Science (HAS) supported me to travel to the INTEL International Science and Engineering Fair four times, even winning the second place award on one occasion. The HAS also supported my competition in the National Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, which I won in 2001, and then went on to represent the United States at the London International Youth Science Forum (I was the first representative from Hawaii, and the youngest delegate that year).

Such experiences and the support of the HAS shaped my academic career and allowed me to pursue science even further. I attended Washington University in St Louis on a full academic scholarship and graduate with my AB in Biology in May. I am now a first-year graduate student working toward my PhD at Duke University.

The sciences are a truly competitive field. It is quite hard for economically privileged students to find the necessary resources and support to pursue an interest in the area. The HAS provides such support to students of all backgrounds. This is especially important in Hawaii, where most students are members of a group that is traditionally underrepresented in science. I am a Native Hawaiian and a woman, so I am acutely aware of the imbalanced population of science. The HAS has made me a very competitive scientist, and it would be irresponsible of our Senate and House to allow such an important organization to be lost, thus denying the same support to future scientists of Hawaii.

In closing, I must remind you that Hawaii is a truly unique environment. Thus, it also faces scientific challenges (of geologic, evolution, or public health origin) that only scientists from Hawaii may be able to truly appreciate and tackle. Supporting science in Hawaii is equivalent to supporting the health and longevity of Hawaii and her people.

Please support the HAS and hear SB 2853. Thank You.

Kiani A.J. Arkus

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