

Date: 03/17/2008

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: SCR 118(SR 063) REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO ENSURE THAT ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT FOR EDUCATION IN THE STATE WILL MEET THE PUBLIC'S EXPECTATIONS.

Purpose of Resolution: Requesting the department of education to convene a task force to ensure that additional investment for education in the state will meet the public's expectations.

Department's Position: The Department of Education opposes this resolution. We appreciate the Legislature's support of education funding. However, as mentioned in the resolution, consultants for the Department completed a funding adequacy study in 2005.

The Department is concerned the proposed task force will require extensive manpower from the Department's fiscal and other administrative operations, which is short-staffed and has high priority to support the implementation of the Weighted Student Formula and other initiatives to ensure its operations are fiscally accountable and responsible.

The Department has projects ongoing in human resources, fiscal services and facilities management. In human resources, improvements are being made in automation of the processing of recruiting, hiring and retention of employees. In fiscal services, the 20-year-old financial systems are being evaluated for refinement or replacement. In the area of facilities, we have initiated a capital asset management project which will help monitor our

school facilities and track the level of funding needed over an extended period of time to maintain facilities at a proper level for the safety and well-being of our students.

In summary, the Department of Education again appreciates the Legislature's support of education funding; however, opposes this resolution, as the time required to implement the task force would reduce the resources available to pursue the current initiatives to improve the fiscal management of currently available funding.