



February 2, 2009
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309

TESTIMONY TO
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: HB11 – Relating to Education

Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Witt, and I am executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 97 private and independent schools across our state. HAIS would like to offer comments on House Bill 11 – Relating to Education, which makes clarifying amendments to laws affecting the charter schools.

We believe that charter schools exist to provide families with distinctive choices for their children's education and that, in order to achieve these ends and maintain their innovative and creative character, charter schools need to be autonomous. For this reason, we have serious reservations about legislation like HB11 that could potentially diminish the autonomy of Hawaii's charter schools.

In addition, concerning the compliance of the charter schools with federal and state laws, we believe that the Charter School Review Panel has already been given the authority to supervise the charter schools and monitor their adherence to applicable laws, so additional oversight of the charter schools by the Board of Education and Department of Education is unnecessary.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.