



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
**OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**  
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 420  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
[www.hawaii.gov/labor](http://www.hawaii.gov/labor)  
Phone: (808) 586-8675 / Fax: (808) 586-8685  
Email: [dilir.ocs@hawaii.gov](mailto:dilir.ocs@hawaii.gov)

### **Testimony of the Office of Community Services**

Good Morning Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the committee,

My name is Sam Aiona and I am testifying as the Executive Director of the Office of the Community Services supporting the intent of SB 1203, SD2. The Office of Community Services (OCS) currently administers over seventy contracts in eighteen program areas to ensure the self-sufficiency of low-income persons, refugees, and immigrants.

OCS at this time continues to support the intent of the bill, and is appreciative of the Senate's efforts to alleviate our concerns regarding the implementation of the program. However, some issues still exist that need to be addressed before this bill becomes law. Again, the mandate of the Office of Community Services addresses the needs of low-income and disadvantaged persons, as well as refugees and immigrants. Our mission statement, under §371K-1, HRS, is to "facilitate and enhance the development, delivery, and coordination of effective programs for those in need..." As stated previously, OCS is not averse to undertaking this task; however we would like to be clear that under our current mission statement we would be unable to offer such a program to those outside our mandate. As such, OCS may not be the appropriate agency to coordinate this effort or produce this report. We defer to the Legislature to consider this question.

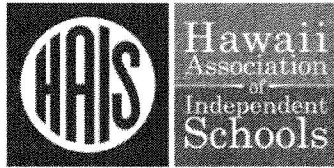
Additionally, it remains unclear where these funds would come from. There is also a lingering issue over the verbiage "any educational program," which does not specify type, duration, or qualifying features that would ensure that the monies held in trust would be used to effectuate the intent of the legislation.

OCS recognizes there would be tremendous savings to the State with such labor applied to common, menial tasks, as well as a valuable work experience benefit to the individual doing the service. However, if the individuals providing this "community service" were to receive such remuneration, this may disqualify them from utilizing the hours spent towards areas that require "community service" in a stricter sense without compensation, such as out-of-state college applications.

We acknowledge that the Legislature recognizes the massive scope of this bill and would like to suggest, as OCS currently only has an office on O'ahu, the Legislature limit the measure to geographical region of its choice in this county as a pilot project. The reduced area would allow our small office to manage this project in the manner it deserves, while reducing manpower hours spent by other State agencies, the University System, and the Department of Education on a statewide collaboration effort.

Again, the Office of Community Services recognizes the merits of the bill, and will continue to support its intent through the discussion period until a final form is arrived upon.

I thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify, and am available to answer any questions you may have.



March 17, 2009  
8:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 309

TESTIMONY TO  
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

RE: SB 1203 SD2 – Relating to Community Service

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, 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 approximately 97 private and independent schools across our state.

The Association supports Senate Bill 1203, Senate Draft 2 – Relating to Community Service, which would require the Office of Community Services of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a voluntary community service program. This program would allow all residents ages fifteen through eighteen to earn scholarship funds and use them to finance the educational program of their choice.

HAIS is of the belief that community service programs not only present students with the opportunity for unique, real-world learning experiences, but also teach them the value and importance of civic responsibility and engagement. Such programs bring schools together with local nonprofit organizations and State departments for the benefit all parties involved, providing the community with much-needed volunteer support and the students with the opportunity to connect with and give back to their communities, as well as acquire valuable character education.

Beyond all this, SB 1203 SD2 offers students an additional benefit – by linking participation in community service activities with the earning of scholarship funds, the measure would provide students who volunteer their time to support the health and well-being of their community with the means to finance their continued studies. The proposed program would make it possible for a greater number of students to afford a post-secondary education, while also promoting the very habits of mind and heart that we want to instill in all of our keiki. For these reasons, we encourage the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.