



April 24, 2009  
2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 329

TESTIMONY TO  
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SCR 149, SD1 – Requests the Board of Education to Modify Public High School Graduation Requirements by Requiring Fifty Hours of Community Service from All Students as Part of the Department of Education's Civic Responsibility Requirement

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 approximately 97 private and independent schools across our state.

The Association supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 149, Senate Draft 1, which requests that the Board of Education establish a new Department of Education (DOE) graduation requirement that would require all DOE high school students to perform fifty hours of community service.

HAIS is of the belief that community service programs not only present students with the chance to participate in 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. In addition, exposure to and involvement in community service activities enable students to acquire valuable character education, promoting the very habits of mind and heart that are the hallmarks of responsible citizenship and which we want to instill in all of our keiki.

For these reasons, we encourage the Committee to pass this resolution.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.