

LATE TESTIMONY

From: Kailuaconnie@aol.com
To: [EDH Testimony](#)
Subject: ***Apologies for not getting this to you on Friday past.
Date: Sunday, March 29, 2009 12:28:29 PM

***My deepest apologies for not getting this to you on Friday.

THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING
SCR 150
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

March 29, 2009

Dear Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

My name is Connie McCracken and I am friend of a child who has autism and deserves to access educational success with options and alternatives that reach to their specific style of learning due to a different set of abilities.

SCR 150 urges the Superintendent of Education to establish and facilitate a special education private school task force to advise the Department of Education (DOE) on policies or procedures for oversight and monitoring of private school or facility placements. The resolution also lists agencies from which representatives are to be selected for the task force. I support HCR 150 as I believe the DOE may benefit from such a task force.

However, it is noted that HCR 150 names the DOE as the agency which would establish and facilitate the task force. We respectfully suggest that an agency independent of the DOE would be the more appropriate organization to take on the work of establishing and facilitating the task force. Hawaii Disability Rights Center or a similar entity with the legal background and knowledge of the I.D.E.A. may be such an organization.

In addition, it appears the majority of individuals on the task force are from the DOE and other state or quasi-state agencies. This limited group of individuals with a limited focus, no disrespect intended, is not representative of others who have a legitimate interest in the DOE's oversight and monitoring of private school or facility placements and who are stakeholders in the matter.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that the Committee expand the task force to include the following members:

- A representative from the Autism Society of Hawai'i who will be able to address issues related to children with autism as well as other disabilities;
- A representative from a for-profit special school in Hawaii that provides educational and related services to children which is not a member of HAIS, as not all of the private schools are members of HAIS. These private schools are faced with unique issues which can be brought to the task force;
- A representative from a private day treatment facility in Hawaii that provides educational and related services to children;
- A representative from a hospital with an educational component;
- The executive director of the Hawaii Disability Rights Center or his designee, as the Hawaii Disability Rights Center has had a great deal of interaction with both the DOE and private schools in the area of special education; and

- A parent with a child who has special needs and was placed in a private school or facility, day treatment facility or hospital.

The additional representatives will bring balance to and greatly assist the task force in fulfilling the mandates of SCR 150. We urge this Committee to adopt our recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Sincerely,

Connie McCracken

Formerly of Kailua, Hawaii
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