

SCR41



March 30, 2009  
1:45 p.m.  
Conference Room 225

TESTIMONY TO  
THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING  
AND HIGHER EDUCATION

RE: SCR 41 - Requesting the Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
to Amend Its Constitution to Reflect a More Equitable Geographic Representation  
Among the Twenty-Six Members of the Accrediting Commission for Schools

Dear Chairs Sakamoto and Tokuda, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Robert Witt, and I am executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS). The Association does not support Senate Concurrent Resolution 41 and would like to offer comments on this resolution.

HAIS, which represents 97 private and independent schools statewide, has a long-standing collaborative relationship with the K-12 Accrediting Commission for Schools (ACS) at the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and is currently represented on the Commission by Dr. Robert Peters, headmaster of Hanahau'oli School, and Ms. Linda Reser, librarian at 'Iolani School.

Our association is not aware of any urgent need to recommend to ACS/WASC that it amend its constitution for the purposes of reflecting greater representation from Hawaii. Working over the past ten years in collaboration with our affiliate association in California, the California Association of Independent Schools, HAIS has strengthened its partnership with ACS/WASC, gained significant measures of autonomy concerning the process of accreditation that are beneficial to Hawaii's independent schools, and worked with ACS/WASC to generally improve accreditation standards for both public and private schools.

We have not heard from any of our member schools about a need or desire to increase ACS representation from Hawaii, nor have we heard from any of our institutional partners across the state, inclusive of the Department of Education and the Hawaii Catholic Schools, that they are dissatisfied with the current number of Hawaii representatives on the Commission. For these reasons, we do not believe that the passage of SCR 41 is necessary.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this important matter.