

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.C.R. 129

Submitted by Doris Ching, Educator
Emeritus Vice President for Student Affairs, University of Hawai'i
March 17, 2010

Chairs Takkumi and Chang, Vice-Chairs Berg and Nakashima, Members of the House Committees on Education and Higher Education:

I fully support House Concurrent Resolution 129 and commend the Legislature for the proposed measure that will address a very important and unresolved learning disability matter for students of all ages who are academically capable to learn, but not by the traditional modes of teaching and learning. This legislation will be an unprecedented, and much needed, major step toward greater awareness and coordinated statewide action to resolve a learning disability issue. It will, potentially, enhance learning and change lives of intellectually capable individuals whose learning is hampered by a disability. This legislation will make a positive difference in the lives of numerous students, educators and parents, and will benefit the entire community. I urge you to pass HCR 129.

In four decades as an educator in lower and higher education, I observed and worked with students who struggled with frustrations and disappointments because of dyslexia and other reading disabilities. Oftentimes, neither they nor their teachers and parents were aware of the presence of the disability. As a graduate student, I voluntarily took college courses to educate myself on the issue and was gratified to discover teaching techniques and strategies to help these students in the classroom. Helping students with dyslexia and reading disabilities succeed academically brought enormous fulfillment to me as an educator, as well as to the student. My regret was not having the skills earlier in my career to recognize the problem and select appropriate teaching strategies and materials. I am confident that parents, students and other educators would be grateful for similar eventual results of HCR 129. Our students with dyslexia and reading disabilities deserve to have teachers who can understand the gamut of teaching and learning—including dyslexia and reading disabilities—that can be addressed in the classroom.

A working group to study the issues and recommend strategies to develop relevant policy is a positive action. As a former teacher and teacher educator, I believe representation of higher education teacher education programs on the working group is critical to the credibility of the results of its work. The Teacher Education Coordinating Committee (TECC) is an appropriate group from which to draw representation of teacher education programs in higher education, provided that the selected members represent the University of Hawai'i and other institutions of higher education. I am inspired and encouraged by your interest in this important issue. Thank you for this opportunity to write in support of HCR 129.

I urge you to support HCR 129 regarding dyslexia.

An estimated five to twenty percent of the population may be dyslexic or have other literacy challenges, many of whom may drop out of school because of the frustration they face while trying to learn to read.

The President's latest education initiative is to keep students engaged in learning, to use data to identify students at risk of failure, and to help them transition to high school and college.

HCR 129 is consistent with achieving the federal government's goals.

HCR 129 will create a task force to develop a comprehensive plan for early identification and assessment of dyslexia; a tiered continuum of intervention and remediation that is research-based and endorsed by the US Department of Education, National Institute of Health (Child Health and Human Development), and National Institute for Literacy.

You can make the resolution even stronger by amending the resolution to include participation by the University of Hawaii to the task force.

Implementation will promote an effective remediation program that may reduce the need for costlier programs, and may qualify for federal funding.

Effective remediation has turned failing students into successful students.

Please support the resolution.

Mary Wong
March 15, 2010

berg1-Matthew

From: Margaret Higa [kandmhiga@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Monday, March 15, 2010 9:19 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: In support of HCR129

Before the House Committee on Education and the House Committee on Higher Education
Re: HCR129 Requesting the establishment of a working group to establish a comprehensive plan to improve awareness of and strengthen support for persons with dyslexia

I am the parent of two dyslexic children, have a master's degree in Counseling Psychology and am the Program Manager for the Hawai'i Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (HIDA).

I feel that HCR129 is a great step forward in raising people's awareness about dyslexia and the challenges faced by dyslexic children, including my own, in school.

I am in support of amendment of HCR129 to specifically include a representative of the University of Hawai'i in the working group.
Please support HCR129.

Margaret J. Higa
email: kandmhiga@hawaii.rr.com

berg1-Matthew

From: Gerald Suyama [gksuyama@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Monday, March 15, 2010 9:56 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: Testimony for HCR 129

I am Gerald Suyama, retired principal of Pearl City High School. I retired after serving in the Department of Education for forty (40) years. If there is one thing that I regret not accomplishing in my tenure as a teacher and administrator, it was to bring greater attention to those students who are struggling with reading. Although I made some inroads to bringing awareness to the problem of dyslexia by in-servicing my staff with experts in the area of dyslexia, I'm compelled to join the effort to reach out to the community at large, and to help organize a concerted effort to address this learning problem. Although I am concerned with the student side of the issue, the dyslexia has its tentacles in the work place and especially the prisons where as much as 75% of the prison population is dyslexia and or ADD. In our democratic society, how are we to give students life skills without reading skills? How do we rehabilitate prisoners without reading skills? How are we going to raise the literacy level of you community?

We must involve the DOE, the colleges, who train teachers, the prison system and other agencies who have direct contact with people who have dyslexia. There must be a joint effort to attack the problem for the students who are struggling everyday in school and to help those who have lived with this disability well into adulthood. If we succeed in turning the tide on dyslexia, the economic and social impact on our community would be enormous in the most positive way. The international organizations supporting efforts to address dyslexia were created to bring awareness to the entire world community. We can no longer ignore this problem in Hawaii.

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Before the House Committee on Education
and
House Committee on Higher Education

DATE: Wednesday, March 17, 2010
TIME: 2:05 PM
PLACE: Conference Room 309

Re: H.C.R. 129

Chair Takumi, Chair Chang, Vice-Chair Berg, Vice-Chair Nakashima,
and Members of the House Committee on Education and
House Committee on Higher Education:

I am the president of the Hawai'i Branch of the International Dyslexia Association ("HIDA"), a Hawai'i non-profit corporation. HIDA's mission is to increase awareness of dyslexia in the community, provide support for dyslexics, families and educators, promote teacher training and improve literacy for struggling readers throughout Hawai'i.

HIDA submits this testimony in support of H.C.R. 129. However, it believes H.C.R. 129 should be amended to specifically provide that the University of Hawai'i be represented in the working group. The University is responsible for preparing so many of Hawai'i's teachers to meet eligibility criteria for teacher certification in the State – it would seem its participation in the working group is essential.

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition, and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological (sound manipulation) component of language. Despite adequate intelligence, students with dyslexia struggle with many or all facets of learning to read, spell and write. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. As they struggle in school, students may develop self-esteem issues.

Children with dyslexia either cannot learn, or have great difficulty learning, to read with teaching methods used in most classrooms today. They can, however, learn if instruction includes the elements contemplated in H.C.R. 129 – e.g., early assessment, tiered continuum of intensity for intervention based on a response to intervention model, evidence-based progress monitoring, research-based interventions consistent with guidelines of the Partnership for Reading, etc. Effective interventions have turned failing students into successful students.

President Obama's latest education initiative is to keep students engaged in learning, to use data to identify students at risk of failure, and to help them transition to high school and college. H.C.R. 129 addresses those very concerns for a very significant number of Hawai'i's students – it is estimated that 10 - 20% of the population has dyslexia or another reading disability. Furthermore, the guidelines of the Partnership for Reading (a collaborative effort by three federal agencies - the National Institute for Literacy, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and U.S. Department of Education) referenced in H.C.R. 129 address the reading needs of all children (not just those with reading disabilities). Because H.C.R. 129 provides that the working group's plan will be consistent with those guidelines, the plan will benefit all children in Hawai'i.

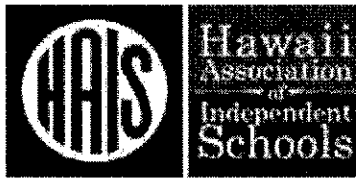
As volunteers with HIDA, we regularly meet parents who are desperate because their children cannot read. Although alternatives such as private tutoring (academic language therapy) and specialized schools exist, the reality is that existing alternatives cannot address the needs of so many children. Without the systemic changes contemplated in H.C.R. 129, far too many will fall short of their potential.

HIDA welcomes the opportunity to participate in the working group, and urges you to support H.C.R. 129.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Ann Ishii". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "I".

Elizabeth Ann Ishii



March 17, 2010
2:05 p.m.
Conference Room 309

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
and COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

RE: HCR 129 – Requesting the Establishment of a Working Group to Develop a Comprehensive Plan to Improve Awareness of and Strengthen Support for Persons with Dyslexia

Chairs Takumi and Chang, Vice Chairs Berg and Nakashima, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Robert Witt and I am executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 99 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 33,000 elementary and secondary students statewide.

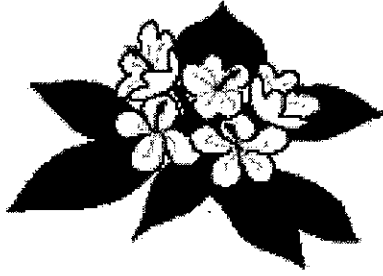
The Association is in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 129, which requests the establishment of a working group to develop a comprehensive plan to improve awareness of and strengthen support for persons with dyslexia.

Dyslexia affects more children in our State than all the other, more visible and well-known childhood conditions and physical challenges combined. Early identification and appropriate instruction are absolutely essential for addressing this significant educational issue.

The establishment of a working group will be an unprecedented and a much needed major step toward greater awareness and a coordinated statewide plan to enhance learning and improve the lives of intellectually capable individuals whose learning is hampered by dyslexia.

HAIS would be pleased to have a representative of our organization serve on the proposed task force and would welcome the opportunity to assist in developing a comprehensive policy to improve awareness and strengthen support for persons with dyslexia, and to assist in developing a comprehensive plan to make training available to educators in the state.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

919 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 101

Honolulu, HI 96814

Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129

email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov

March 17, 2010

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Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
House Committee on Education
Representative Jerry Chang, Chair
House Committee on Higher Education
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HCR 129 - REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A
WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN TO IMPROVE AWARENESS OF AND STRENGTHEN
SUPPORT FOR PERSONS WITH DYSLEXIA.

Dear Chairs Takumi and Chang and Members of the Committees,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State
Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
(IDEA), **supports HCR 129** which aims to develop a comprehensive plan
to identify students with dyslexia and provide them with evidence based
instructional strategies that offer optimal educational benefit.

Students with specific learning disabilities, including dyslexia,
make up roughly half of Hawaii's students receiving special education and
related services. Early identification and targeted, effective educational
interventions have been shown to ameliorate many of the negative
outcomes associated with poor reading and writing skills.

SEAC is eager to provide a representative to serve on the working
group. We believe that the findings of this working group will help
to enhance efforts already underway in the Department to train both
special and regular educators how to successfully implement Response
to Intervention, an approach that uses students' response to high-quality
instruction to guide educational decisions, including decisions about the
efficacy of instruction and intervention, eligibility for special programs,
design of individual education programs, and effectiveness of special
education services (Batsche et al., 2005).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this issue.
Should you have any questions, SEAC would be happy to answer them.

Sincerely,

Ivalee Sinclair, Chair

Mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act



Assets School

Learning that transforms lives

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Honolulu, Hawaii 96818
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Jyo Bridgewater Borg, J.D.
Principal, K-8

Patti Jenks, M.Ed.
Principal, 9-12



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March 16, 2010

VIA EMAIL

EDNtestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

House Committee on Education
House Committee on Higher Education

RE: Testimony in Support of H.C.R. 129

Chair Takumi, Chair Chang, Vice-Chair Berg, Vice-Chair Nakashima,
and Members of the House Committee on Education and House
Committee on Higher Education:

I am submitting this testimony in support of H.C.R. 129. As the K-8 Principal of Assets School, I work directly with students and families who are impacted by dyslexia. There are countless more such students and families who struggle without the benefit of a supportive school environment, or whose school simply lacks the expertise and means to provide appropriate, effective instruction. Much is now known about early intervention, research based instruction, and effective progress monitoring.

I commend the legislature for this bill, which will bring attention to, and information about, dyslexia to a wider population, and convene a working group for the benefit of all.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jyo Bridgewater Borg
K-8 Principal
Assets School

jborg@assets-school.net
808-440-3617

Serving gifted and/or dyslexic learners

berg1-Matthew

From: Margarett [dtch@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 16, 2010 4:27 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: HCR129

Importance: High

Aloha,

I am a Native Hawaiian woman who overcame my dyslexia and founded the Dyslexia Tutoring Center of Hawaii, Inc. (DTCH), a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization located in 'Ewa Beach, Hawai'i.

Discovering people can succeed despite their dyslexia was enough of an inspiration for me to open DTCH. The core of the services offered at DTCH lie in improving a child's socio-emotional development by strengthening their self-worth and tapping into the schools, communities and families to achieve this. As a result of my service to the communities within the State of Hawai'i, I was one of five individuals that recently received the 2009 Jefferson Award (men and women, recognized for their selfless dedication to community service), 2008 KOA Award winner for Education, and the 2009 Community Service Award from the National Society Daughters of American Revolution.

I am in support of H.C.R. No. 129, have been a strong advocate for myself and my children within the dyslexia realm for many years, and made it part of my mission to raise awareness on dyslexia throughout the State of Hawai'i. The development, outcome, and data gathered during this "Working Group" can provide valuable information and support for the educators, parents, students, and professionals in our State. I feel that we need to find "key" people to raise awareness of dyslexia in the right way. **It is crucial to find experts in the field of dyslexia that hold certifications in the areas of assessments and identification of dyslexia, remedial curricula, and accommodations that address these needs.**

Through the eyes of my children, students, parents, and the community, I would like to share with you a quote of mine:

"Education is so important for all of us! We all learn differently and are unique in our own special way. Unfortunately, our society is quick to judge us on our weaknesses instead of praising us for our strengths. This could "make or break" a child as they are growing up and effect their self-esteem through adulthood. Taking the time to look through the eyes of another is not much to ask, understanding them could make all the difference in the world, having compassion is rare.....To know me is to love me, not to hurt, abuse, or judge me.....I am Margarett Pegi Minicola Pang and I am dyslexic."

Mahalo Nui Loa!

Margarett P.M. Pang
Founder and Executive Director

Dyslexia Tutoring Center of Hawaii, Inc. (DTCH)
91-2135 Fort Weaver Road
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HAWAII DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER

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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

**Committee on Education
Committee on Higher Education**

**Testimony in Support of HCR 129
Dyslexia Working Group**

**Wednesday, March 17, 2010, 2:05 P.M.
Conference Room 309**

Chair Takumi, Chair Chang and Members of the Committees:

I am Louis Erteschik, Staff Attorney at the Hawaii Disability Rights Center, and am testifying in support of this Concurrent Resolution .

We believe it is important that the DOE train its personnel to provide proper education to students with dyslexia. Our experience with the DOE is that in general it has done a very poor job of educating students with disabilities. We represent many, many students with disabilities in Special Education litigation and are quite familiar with the DOE and its programs that are available to students with disabilities .They tend to be very resistant to complying with their obligation to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education as they are required to under the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

We supported passage of SB 2217 this session as it would have been a slight step in the right direction for a very targeted group of students that often may be quite bright but get misdiagnosed because of a lack of knowledge about dyslexia. In fact, we would, in the future, like to see a bill such as this expanded to encompass other disabilities such as autism, which sadly the DOE is totally unable to address and is a problem afflicting many more students than is dyslexia.

The result this session of the effort behind that bill is now HCR 129 which sets up a working group to explore the issues addressed in that legislation. For the same reasons we supported the bill, we are pleased to support this Concurrent Resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

TESTIMONY FROM: Camille Chun-Hoon

TO: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
Representative Lyla B. Berg, Vice Chair
House Committee on Education

TO: Representative Jerry L. Chang, Chair
Representative Mark. M. Nakashima, Vice Chair
House Committee on Higher Education

HEARING: Wednesday, March 17, 2010, 2:05 p.m. Conf. Room 309

RE: HCR 129

Dear Chairpersons and Members of the House Education & Higher Education Committees:

I am a parent of a child diagnosed with an unspecified reading disorder who has received services through the Hawaii International Dyslexia Association (HIDA). I support HCR 129, with an amendment including the University of Hawaii as a participant in the working group.

The HIDA is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to increase awareness of dyslexia in our community. HIDA additionally provides teacher training, and community education in support of its goal to improve literacy for struggling readers and dyslexic people in Hawaii. In the year 2009 HIDA offered its tutorials for hundreds of students, parents, and teachers who sought to address their students' learning difficulties.

I support HCR 129. HCR 120 will establish a framework to develop comprehensive public policy in this state, and enable training in the early identification of dyslexia more available to all educators. The HCR directs the coordinating body to develop a comprehensive plan identifying instructional interventions to meet the needs of all students with literacy challenges. Educators, tutors and advocates will equally benefit from this unique collaboration to review and research evidence- based classroom instructional interventions for literacy difficulties.

Although addressing all of the concerns described in the resolution will require a tremendous amount of resolve, it is important to begin making improvements for this population of students with non-traditional needs. Currently, every aspect of our educational system faces serious economic impacts. It is important, now more than ever, to meet the economic challenge in the economic downturn by channeling scarce resources to address unmet needs of students whose literacy challenges comprise a significant segment of the general population (estimated at 10-15%).

I respectfully urge you to pass HCR 129 to include the University of Hawaii as a member of the group. Thank you for the opportunity to make these comments.