

**SCR110**

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.C.R. 110**

March 17, 2010

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

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education and Housing:

I fully support Senate Concurrent Resolution 110 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 SCR 110.

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 SCR110. 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, established by the Department of Education and University of Hawai'i 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. I am inspired and encouraged by your interest in this important issue. Thank you for this opportunity to write in support of SCR 110.

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**Before the Senate Committee on Education and Housing**

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 17, 2010  
**TIME:** 1:15 PM  
**PLACE:** Conference Room 225

**Re: S.C.R. 110**

**Chair Sakamoto, Vice-Chair Kidani, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Education and Housing:**

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 S.C.R. 110. However, it believes S.C.R. 110 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 S.C.R. 110 – 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 the guidelines of the Partnership for Reading, etc. Effective interventions have turned failing students into successful students.

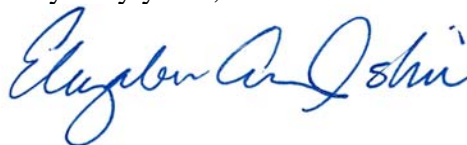
President Obama's latest education initiative is to keep students engaged in learning, to use data to identify students at risk of failure, and to help them transition to high school and college. S.C.R. 110 specifically addresses those very concerns for a very significant number

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 S.C.R. 110 address the reading needs of all children (not just those with reading disabilities). Because S.C.R. 110 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 S.C.R. 110, far too many will fall short of their potential.

HIDA appreciates the leadership of the Senate Committee on Education & Housing on this matter, and welcomes the opportunity to participate in the working group.

Very truly yours,



Elizabeth Ann Ishii

## **HAWAII DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER**

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### **THE SENATE THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2010**

#### **Committee on Education and Housing**

#### **Testimony in Support of SCR 110 Dyslexia Working Group**

**Wednesday, March 17, 2010, 1:15 P.M.  
Conference Room 225**

Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Committee:

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 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 SCR 110 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.



March 17, 2010  
1:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 225

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING

RE: SCR 110 – Requesting the Establishment of a Working Group to Develop a Comprehensive Plan to Improve Awareness of and Strengthen Support for Persons with Dyslexia

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Kidani 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 99 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 33,000 elementary and secondary students statewide.

The Association is in strong support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 110, 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.



# Assets School

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March 16, 2010

VIA EMAIL

[EDHTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:EDHTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov)

Senate Committee on Education and Housing

RE: Testimony in Support of S.C.R. 110

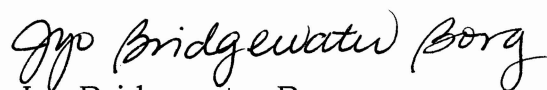
Chair Sakamoto, Vice-Chair Kidani, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education and Housing:

I am submitting this testimony in support of S.C.R. 110. 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](mailto:jborg@assets-school.net)  
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**S E A C**  
**Special Education Advisory Council**  
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March 17, 2010

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Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senate Committee on Education and Housing  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SCR 110 - REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A  
WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN TO IMPROVE AWARENESS OF AND STRENGTHEN  
SUPPORT FOR PERSONS WITH DYSLEXIA.

Dear Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State  
Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
(IDEA), **supports** SCR 110 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



**Susan Walker Kowen**

2334 Ferdinand Avenue  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822  
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Fax: (808) 949-0389  
[swkowen@aol.com](mailto:swkowen@aol.com)

Before the Senate Committee on Education and Housing

Date: Wednesday March 17, 2010

Conference Room 225, 1:15 p.m.

Re: SCR110 Relating to Education

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am submitting this testimony in support of SCR110. The delivery of services to students in Hawai`i with dyslexia is of the utmost importance to our community and to me.

I am an attorney who, for ten years, served as a member of the Board of Directors of the International Dyslexia Association (Baltimore, MD), the premier scientific research organization dedicated exclusively to the study and treatment of dyslexia. I am the only person from Hawai`i to have served on this Board of Directors. I am also a member of the Board of Directors of Assets School in Honolulu.

My experience with dyslexia is also personal: I am the mother of two adult children who were diagnosed with dyslexia in 2nd grade and kindergarten. My children attended independent and public schools in Hawai`i. Without the expenditure of significant personal time and family resources, these men would not be the successful (college graduate), contributing members of society they are today.

Dyslexia affects more children in our State than all the other, more visible and well-known childhood conditions and physical challenges *combined*. For 20 years, I have been intensely involved with the issue of dyslexia in Hawai`i. I know from both a knowledge of the scientific research, and from professional and personal experience, that early identification and appropriate instruction are absolutely essential for addressing this significant educational issue.

SCR110 is a dramatic step towards greater awareness of dyslexia in our community. Training of educators to teach and support students with dyslexia and other reading disabilities is not only critical to the success of these students, but essential for the economic and social well-being of our State. Too many under served dyslexic children end up in prison, develop problems with drugs, and remain under- or un-employed. Addressing the needs of these students in their early school years is cost-effective when compared to the financial drain on our economy and social services when left un-addressed.

In the words of Sally Shaywitz, M.D., Co-director of the Yale Center for the Study of Learning and Attention, *"We now know that dyslexia affects one out of every five children- ten million in America alone. In every neighborhood and in every classroom worldwide there are children struggling to read. For many affected children dyslexia has extinguished the joys of childhood."*

I encourage the legislature to move forward expeditiously with legislation geared to better addressing the issue of dyslexia in our schools and commend the legislature on initiating this process by establishing a task force as outline in SCR110.

Susan Walker Kowen, J.D.  
Communication and Development Consultant  
2334 Ferdinand Avenue  
Honolulu, Hawai`i 96822

Please support SCR 110/HCR 129 Regarding Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a serious issue for many people who live in Hawaii, especially for those who attend our educational facilities (DOE). An estimated 5-15% of the US population has dyslexia. Dyslexia and other learning disabilities account for roughly 44% of all disabilities seen within our public school system. Most students with dyslexia have strong social and cognitive abilities that help them compensate and 'survive' while enduring an educational approach that inadequately addresses their needs. Many of these students do drop out of school as a result of frustration due to continuous failed attempts to succeed. Creating programs that increase literacy by incorporating multi-sensory approaches and technological supports will increase literacy rates, graduation rates, increase competition in the work force, support positive social interactions in the community, etc. Also, when a school system adapts to meet the needs of children with special needs by learning new concepts and adding in new 'tools' the entire school system can benefit. The tactics and methods used to work with students with Dyslexia can also be used to support all other readers. In Hawaii we have an epidemic of low level readers, disabled and non-disabled.

SCR 110/HCR 219 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.

Please amend the resolution to include participation by the University of Hawaii in the task force.

Mahalo,

Sean Koegel  
University of Hawaii  
College of Education  
Department of Special Education  
Instructor  
skoegel@hawaii.edu  
808-233-9481

## TESTIMONY TO SCR 110

I am Gerald Suyama, retired principal of Pearl City High School, and I support Senate Concurrent Resolution 110. I have been in education for forty (40) years. As I look back on my career, there is one aspect in the total scheme of how we serve our students that is of great concern to me. We have not dealt with the reading problem associated with dyslexia. Dyslexia is treated as a stepchild with no clear distinction as to the category of learning dysfunction, and therefore there has not been a systematic approach to helping students and adults overcome the obstacles associated with dyslexia.

Students and adults struggle everyday of their lives trying to keep up with classroom assignments and tasks involving reading. Loss of self-esteem and confidence are debilitating affects of illiteracy. Students drop out of school and many will end up in prison. In fact the average prison population is 75% dyslexic. We can no longer ignore the toll dyslexia has taken on our society. Our democratic society demands a knowledgeable and participatory citizenry. Those who struggle with literacy are often left out of this process resulting in a weakened community.

We must bring all institutions and agencies together with a single purpose of focusing on strategies to bring awareness and training to address the issues surrounding dyslexia. We must bring awareness to our parents, to our colleges who are training teachers, to our prisons so that literacy programs may be instituted, and to all the grade level schools, to train the teachers who are facing these students now. If we are successful, the economic and social impact will be enormous. We need to act now.

Thank you.

## sakamoto2 - Erin

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**From:** berg1-Matthew  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 16, 2010 4:37 PM  
**To:** EDH Testimony  
**Subject:** FW: SCR110

**Importance:** High

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**From:** Margarete [mailto:dtch@hawaii.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 16, 2010 4:30 PM  
**To:** EDNtestimony  
**Subject:** SCR110  
**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 S.C.R. No. 110, 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 Margarete Pegi Minicola Pang and I am dyslexic."*

**Mahalo Nui Loa!**

**Margarette P.M. Pang**

Founder and Executive Director

**Dyslexia Tutoring Center of Hawaii, Inc. (DTCH)**

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**From:** Margaret Higa [kandmhiga@hawaii.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 15, 2010 9:24 PM  
**To:** EDH Testimony  
**Subject:** In support of SCR110

Before the Senate Committee on Education and Housing  
Re: SCR110 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 SCR110 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 SCR110 to specifically include a representative of the University of Hawai'i in the working group.  
Please support SCR110.

Margaret J. Higa  
email: [kandmhiga@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:kandmhiga@hawaii.rr.com)

From: Mary Wong, Individual

I urge you to support SCR 110 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.

SCR 110 is consistent with achieving the federal government's goals.

SCR 110 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.