

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Date: 03/23/2011

Committee: House Agriculture
House Hawaiian Affairs

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: HR 153(HCR177)

Purpose of Resolution: Requesting each school within a regional administrative district where taro farms are located to serve poi or other taro products, and requesting the director of agriculture education program to arrange for work, volunteer, or study opportunities on taro farms.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (DOE) believes it would not be able to honor the request in this resolution. DOE understands there are taro farms in every administrative district in the state. Most farms are not certified and do not sell taro or taro products directly to consumers. DOE questions whether there is an adequate supply of taro and taro products, produced from Hawaii-grown taro, to have taro or taro products on every school menu weekly. Finally, restricting procurement of taro and taro products only to farmers in the administrative district in which the school is located would not be an acceptable procurement practice, because of the lack of competition.

Therefore, DOE cannot support the section of the proposed resolution to serve poi or other taro products in a regional administrative district where taro farms are located.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512

RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

JAMES J. NAKATANI
Deputy to the Chairperson

**TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND
ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION AND BUSINESS**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2011

TIME 11:00 AM

CONFERENCE ROOM 329

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 177

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 153

**REQUESTING EACH SCHOOL WITHIN A REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT WHERE
TARO FARMS ARE LOCATED TO SERVE POI OR OTHER TARO PRODUCTS, AND
REQUESTING THE DIRECTOR OF THE AGRICULTURE EDUCATION PROGRAM TO
ARRANGE FOR WORK, VOLUNTEER, OR STUDY OPPORTUNITIES ON TARO FARMS**

Chairpersons Hanohano and Tsuji and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Concurrent Resolution No. 177 and House Resolution No. 153. The resolutions request that each school within a regional administrative district where taro farms are located serve poi or other taro products, and that the director of the Agriculture Education Program arrange for work, volunteer, or study opportunities on taro farms.

The Department of Agriculture (DOA) supports the intent of this resolution, since we fully support the concept of food self-sufficiency and the "Buy Local, It Matters" call-to-action campaign. However, we would like to defer to the comments of the Department of Education since they will play a key role in the implementation of these resolutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these resolutions.

clee2 - Matt

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2011 9:11 PM
To: HAWtestimony
Cc: Ken_Conklin@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HCR177 on 3/23/2011 11:00:00 AM

Testimony for HAW/AGR 3/23/2011 11:00:00 AM HCR177

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Kenneth R. Conklin, Ph.D.
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: Ken_Conklin@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 3/18/2011

Comments:

I have two objections to this proposed resolution.

1. There is already a shortage of poi. If schools are required to serve poi, that will exacerbate the shortage and will cause the market price of poi to rise even higher, making it too expensive for kupuna to afford.
2. The resolution proposes that school children should be taken away from their classrooms to go out to the taro patch to be used as virtual slave labor. But most of our school children are already performing far below the academic standards set by federal and state governments. They need more time in the classroom, not less.

clee2 - Matt

From: Hardy Spoehr [HSpoehr@papaolalokahi.org]
Sent: Monday, March 21, 2011 7:34 AM
To: HAWtestimony
Subject: Testimony: HCR 177/ HR 153

TESTIMONY: HCR 177 / HR 153

Wednesday, March 23, 2011
11:00am
Conference Room 329
State Capitol

Papa Ola Lokahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Board, strongly supports this legislation. Given the high rates of obesity among our island children, school lunch programs and other related food programs need to incorporate our own local foods. There is no reason why poi, kalo, and kalo products should not substitute for French fries and other unhealthy items. In terms of working in the lo'i, all children should experience this as well.

Thank you

Hardy Spoehr, Executive Director
Papa Ola Lokahi
894 Queen Street
Honolulu, HI 96813
808-597-6550

clee2 - Matt

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 21, 2011 2:31 PM
To: HAWtestimony
Cc: keokikaloman@aol.com
Subject: Testimony for HCR177 on 3/23/2011 11:00:00 AM

Testimony for HAW/AGR 3/23/2011 11:00:00 AM HCR177

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: George Keoki Fukumitsu
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: keokikaloman@aol.com
Submitted on: 3/21/2011

Comments:

As a taro farmer who has raised his children and grandchildren on taro/poi I am in total support of including poi on the DOE lunch menu. It is healthy, anti-bacterial and a great source of nutrition. It is also a visible and practical link to who we are as a people who once thrived in these islands on this land. We Hawaiians are at the highest risk of diabetes heart and other diseases that where else can we influence our children to start their lives on a healthy path which hopefully influence their home life. Mahalo, Keoki Fukumitsu, Kaloman

Re: HR153

This is great step for school cafeterias I sure hope it sets a trend to all local and certified foods. My family is farming kalo in Waiahole, O'ahu. We would be interested in supplying kalo or poi along with anyone else to Waiahole Elementary. This is good in so many ways. Meala Bishop

clee2 - Matt

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 21, 2011 10:02 PM
To: HAWtestimony
Cc: pennysfh@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HCR177 on 3/23/2011 11:00:00 AM

Testimony for HAW/AGR 3/23/2011 11:00:00 AM HCR177

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Penny Levin
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: pennysfh@hawaii.rr.com
Submitted on: 3/21/2011

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Committee members,

These two resolution bills (HCR 177/HR153) are a great step in the right direction for our state. For too long, our local schools have had to serve menus defined and created at the federal level and geared to mainland tastes and diets.

These resolutions support local food self-sufficiency and providing healthy culturally relevant foods. Taro is both hypo-allergenic (students with wheat and rice gluten allergies can eat it) but is also one of the most complex carbohydrate starches you can eat (better and safer for diabetics).

As an culturally indigenous food, the inclusion of taro, poi and lu'au makes sense for Hawaii. We need to be sure our children are not growing up believing that the cooked spinach they are told is lu'au in today's schools is the real deal or an better alternative.

These two resolutions also encourage schools to serve taro, lu'au and poi in meals that come direct from the taro farmers in their districts which means significantly reduced fuel miles for the food in our schools (the average canned corn and hot dog lunch travels 3,500 miles not to mention the fuel expended in processing and packaging). Local food sourcing expanded markets for taro farmers and dollars stay in our communities longer.

The more students we can bring into the lo'i, the more they will have another reason to learn more about, and stay connected, to the place they live.

Mahalo for supporting HCR177 and HR153.