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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: HCR 230/HR 201 – URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ACCEPT THE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING (ACT) SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR DETERMINING IF A SCHOOL IS MEETING “NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND” COMPLIANCE.

March 30, 2011

WIL OKABE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Takumi and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association supports HCR 230/HR 201 to accept the nationally recognized American College Testing (ACT) Scholastic Aptitude Examination results for determining if a school is meeting “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) compliance.

ACT is accepted as a college entrance examination by colleges and universities across the nation. As such its rigorous requirements that test content knowledge in English, math, reading, and science provide students, teachers, and career counselors with an extensive, detailed report of each student’s learning and comprehension.

The ACT is a cost effective test that provides timely feedback to teachers and students preparing for career and college readiness programs. Providing schools with the authority to choose their standardized test gives them significant ownership and responsibility to be in compliance with NCLB.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

belatti4-Joal

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, March 27, 2011 11:49 AM
To: EDNtestimony
Cc: aprilhi@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HCR230 on 3/30/2011 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for EDN 3/30/2011 9:00:00 AM HCR230

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: April Inouye
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: aprilhi@hawaii.rr.com
Submitted on: 3/27/2011

Comments:

I highly support consideration of the proposal that the ACT be used in place of the HSA. The ACT is an achievement test that measures reading, English, math, science and writing skills of high school students. The ACT is a national exam and the results would compare states and school districts fairly across the board. Additionally, the ACT could be used not only for state assessment, students taking the ACT would also use the score for college admissions.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR NO. 230 and HRNO 201

I am Gwen Mau, a 17 year College & Career Counselor from Moanalua High School. I have been handling ACT testing, and results of SAT, for all those years and have been exploring the reports that follow those exams for our school. We have the unique position of being a District Choice Testing Site, and we give the ACT to all of our juniors, the PLAN to our sophomores, and the EXPLORE to our freshmen on one day in April. We also give the HSA, and have a unique comparative view of the testing systems. I strongly support HCR 230 and I highly recommend that ACT be adopted to help us with testing for yearly progress for the following reasons:

1. The ACT's College & Career Readiness System is a well thought out series of assessments that help to evaluate, develop and support the preparation of students for postsecondary success. Beginning with the 8th grade, these assessment instruments capture critical information that help teachers, counselors, and administrators assist student better prepare for college by offering clear bench marks and suggestions for what those bench marks mean.

2. ACT is an educational organization that deals with research almost as much as testing, so that their reports to both students and teachers specify clear skills that need to be covered to improve in the exams, which help teachers, counselors, and students know where to focus and where there is a need to focus. These skills are put onto a large chart for everyone to see clearly. Students know what they know and what they need to know to get to their personal goals.

3. At Moanalua, students understand that the ACT is an accepted college entrance exam and their scores will be forwarded to the universities and colleges of their choice. There is a natural motivation to do their best on this exam. It is becoming a very popular day at our school with test day being one of the highest attendance days of the school year.

4. ACT gives much more than assessment scores. It provides a personal profile section, and a unique Career Interest Inventory, and assists students with understanding their readiness for college level work and helps to identify possible college majors/careers, all which help to plan for life after high school.

5. The ACT also has aligned its test with National Common State Core Standards which has been accepted by the Hawaii DOE. ACT was involved early on with the creation of the Common Standards that is because Act is a conduit for both college professors in their field and teachers who want to get students to become successful in college.

6. ACT has also been accepted by other states to help them meet Yearly Progress. States like Illinois and Michigan use ACT for NCLB and their AYP. This year a Kansas school district was given a waiver from the NCLB and the National DOE to give the ACT. Colorado has been giving all their juniors the ACT since 2001, and now shows college attendance at 82%, up from 68 %.

7. The cost of ACT, which is a one day exam, is \$48.00/student, for it's practice exams which are given each year before the 11th grade run about \$10.00 per student. For a 2000+ school like Moanalua, the cost is about \$35,000. Compare that with the cost of HSA, and the cost of instructional time lost for teachers and students, ACT is clearly a less costly endeavor.

8. We have compared the two college entrance exams, SAT and ACT, and because the ACT is curriculum based, it is a much better measure of what we as educators are trying to accomplish with our students, which is to improve the curriculum so more students can get to the advanced learning that is so necessary for global jobs now. With data from 3 years of testing, we at Moanalua believe we can show academic progress from year to year.

9. The very core of the ACT, which is a non-profit, international organization, is its clear goals that have been published:

- High quality measurement of achievement
- Motivation of improved instruction and scholarship
- Exploitation of research possibilities

Since its inception in 1959, ACT has been working with assessment and improving instruction. They have the expertise that has lasted 50 years!

10. It has been said that teachers need more time with instructing their students; the one day testing strategy a year, will allow teachers more time, and with longevity reports now being worked on by the DOE, teachers and students and counselors should have continuous skills reported to them. The logic of the system is easy and clear. HSA has often left families and students puzzled about what it means to take their exam. Our students who fail, only know that they failed. It is crushing for them, even with three chances! We need a test that can really help students and teachers to improve.

Please pass HCR230 and HR201 so that we can begin to explore and support the ACT for our Yearly Progress report, and encourage the DOE and NCLB to support such a move. We can show real academic progress with the ACT, and it would meet our common goal of getting more students to the college level.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gwen Mau, College & Career Counselor
Moanalua High School