



March 19, 2012 – 2:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 309

TESTIMONY TO  
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SB 2800 SD1 – RELATING TO EXEMPTIONS FROM CHILD CARE  
LICENSING.

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Belatti and Members of the Committee,

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

**HAIS is in strong support of this Administration measure.** SB 2800 SD1 adds exemptions for any kindergarten, school, or program licensed by the Charter School Review Panel, the Hawaii Council of Private Schools (HCPS), or any federal agency from child care licensing by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

The private school community, including schools whose programs are licensed by DHS, has the capacity to self-govern; the evidence for this is the successful self-regulating system we have had in place at HAIS and HCPS since 1996 when the Legislature de-regulated private schools from Department of Education supervision and asked HAIS to set up a self-governing system that replicated or improved upon the long-standing DOE private school licensing program. Since that time, HCPS, an affiliate of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, has reliably licensed about 100 private schools.

The licensing provided by DHS to our private school community has three dimensions: 1) early education programs for children under five (5) years of age; 2) summer fun programs that are not educational summer school programs; and 3) before and after school programs. Of the three, the early education programs are most prominent, and the primary focus of the existing licensing program is

the health and safety and well-being of young children. Should HAIS and HCPS become responsible for licensing of these programs, the existing elementary and secondary licensing program would require some modification to reflect the rigorous standards expected of schools with responsibility for young children.

Our position is that our association has the capacity for this given some assessment and examination of needs. Our member schools would be obliged to reimburse our association for the additional costs involved. Given these realities, we are here today to share our belief that this measure is aligned with the best interests and values of independent schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to strongly support SB 2800 SD1.