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**TESTIMONY FOR SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 121/SENATE  
RESOLUTION 61, SENATE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO ACT 51**

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Hon. David Y. Ige, Chair  
Hon. Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, April 11, 2012, 9:35 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

Honorable Chair Ige and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing the IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 150 local members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in support of SCR 121/SR 61, SD1, relating to evaluating Act 51.

When the Reinventing Education Act of 2004 was passed into law, it heralded big promises for local schools, including more equal funding, increased access to educational resources and classroom materials, greater community involvement in school governance, and streamlined accountability. Nearly eight years after the measure was signed into law, however, its proposals remain a mixed success, at best. Act 51's primary funding reform—introduction of a weighted student formula—has been mired in controversy since its inception, largely because of its adverse impact on schools with small population sizes or geographical isolation. Concerns have been mitigated, somewhat, by the adoption of a \$3 million discretionary fund, operated by the Department of Education, to address such schools' needs, but the problem of resource inequality lingers. Similarly, accountability reforms, such as the creation of School Community Councils, been a boon to communally supported schools seeking innovative curriculum or calendar changes, but a boondoggle to teachers and administrators at schools that have persistently had trouble garnering stakeholder involvement. At a time when many schools are seeking Board of Education

waivers to pilot new programs, bell schedules, and achievement measures, it is imperative that schools have the flexibility and tools to coordinate with all impacted parties. Lawmakers will only know the extent of existing resource shortages if a comprehensive evaluation of Act 51's reforms is performed, resulting in suggestions for how new mandates might be augmented as we move toward a more integrated, high-stakes education system. Finally, technology is progressing at an unprecedented speed. Though enacted less than a decade ago, Act 51's proposals could not have anticipated the meteoric rise of social networking or use of computerized tablets for educational purposes. Once convened, the assessment called for by this resolution can, and likely will, determine how new technology might facilitate educational reforms or necessitate altogether new improvements.

For these reasons, the IMUAlliance wholeheartedly supports a review of Act 51's mandates and their impact upon local classrooms. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this resolution.

Sincerely,  
Kris Coffield  
*Legislative Director*  
IMUAlliance