

# SCR78

REQUESTING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO REQUIRE EACH SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL TO REVIEW ITS SCHOOL'S ATTENDANCE POLICY, CREATE BENCHMARKS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE, AND DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO MEET THOSE BENCHMARKS.

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Committee: Committee on Education  
Hearing Date/Time: Friday, March 23, 2012, 1:15 p.m.  
Place: Room 225  
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii Supporting S.C.R. 78

Dear Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committee on Education:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii (“ACLU of Hawaii”) writes in support of S.C.R. 78.

Homeless and low-income families often face numerous barriers to educational success, including lack of safe school transportation and policies and procedures that discourage school attendance. During the course of litigating *Kaleuati v. Tonda* (the class-action suit challenging the Department of Education’s failure to implement the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act), we received testimony from homeless families explaining how young children and parents routinely spent two hours – each way – to get to and from school. We also heard from young children forced to walk on dangerous highways, in the dark, just to get to school on time. We also found that children were forced to change schools multiple times in a single year or were denied the ability to even enroll in school. While we hope that our settlement agreement has resolved these issues, this resolution should encourage DOE to go further to provide homeless and low-income with the support they need to regularly attend school and ultimately achieve educational success.

The mission of the ACLU of Hawaii is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawaii fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawaii is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawaii has been serving Hawaii for over 40 years.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Laurie A. Temple  
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