

SCR109/SR75

Foreign Language Immersion Classes in
Public Elementary Schools
EDU, WAM



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/22/2013

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: SCR 109/SR 075 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE IMMERSION CLASSES IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Purpose of Resolution: Department of Education; Foreign Languages; Public Elementary Schools.

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) does not support these resolutions as it would impact or replace priorities set forth in the Executive Budget for Fiscal Biennium 2013-15. The constitutional authority to formulate statewide educational policy falls under the Hawaii State Board of Education. Furthermore, any decision to create foreign language immersion classes in public elementary school should be left to the Department and aligned with its Strategic Plan priorities and implementation.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Cc: tabraham08@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR109 on Mar 22, 2013 14:05PM
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2013 9:17:37 AM

SCR109

Submitted on: 3/20/2013

Testimony for EDU/TIA on Mar 22, 2013 14:05PM in Conference Room Auditorium

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Troy Abraham	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support urgent passage of this bill to promote foreign language in all hawaii school system

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Testimony for SCR No.109 Foreign language Immersion

Aloha Senators,

My name is Erica Owan, a persistent freshman testifying for SCR No.109, Foreign Language Immersion. I attend Kauai High School and would have dreamed for a program like this, but now it's my turn to make a difference and ensure this opportunity is available for all upcoming public school elementary students. This is a great opportunity for children and should not be disregarded. I strongly support this Resolution and I know you too will be convinced by these following reasons:

- Improves Verbal and Mathematical skills
 - “Studies (Holobow et. Al,1987; Swain & Lapkin, 1991) show that immersion students do as well as or even better than non-immersion students in verbal and mathematical skills.”

- Enhances Cognitive Development
 - “Research indicates that children who are exposed to a foreign language at a young age achieve higher levels of cognitive development at an earlier age. (Bialystok & Hakuta 1994; Fuchsen 1989)”
- Helps improve the chances of getting a job, knowing more than one language is more impressive on a resume, and will help you communicate with clients of all dialects.
- It make kids more aware of other cultures
 - “...(E)xposure to a foreign language serves as a means of helping children to intercultural competence. The awareness of a global community can be enhanced when children have the opportunity to experience involvement with another culture through a foreign language.” (Curtain & Dahlberg 2004)
 - “The positive impact of cultural information is significantly enhanced when that information is experienced through foreign language and accompanied

Testimony for SCR No.109 Foreign language Immersion

by experiences in culturally authentic situations.” (Curtain & Dahlberg 2004)

- Higher chances of getting into college
 - Ivy colleges such as Stanford expect four years of foreign language, and most colleges require 2 years of foreign language
 - “Students who were in “rigorous” programs in high school—that included three years of foreign language study—were likely to earn better grades in college and less likely to drop out.” (Horn & Kojaku 2001)
- It helps the child understand their native language better.
 - But research consistently finds that the immersion experience actually enhances English language development (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000).
- It can let the child meet new people that they might have not approached if they didn't know their native dialect.
- Helps mental development
- Helps score higher on standardized tests
 - Other studies correlate bilingual proficiency with higher scores on standardized tests and tests of both verbal and nonverbal intelligence (Caldas & Boudreaux, 1999; Hakuta, 1986; Thomas, Collier, & Abbott, 1993).
 - Foreign language learners consistently outperform control groups in core subject areas on standardized tests often significantly. (Armstrong & Rogers 1997, Saunders 1998, Masciantonio 1977, Rafferty 1986, Andrade, Kretschmer & Kretschmer 1989)

Testimony for SCR No.109 Foreign language Immersion

Bibliography:

- Marcos, Kathleen M. "Benefits of Being Bilingual." *Cal.org*. Center for Applied Linguistics, 2008. Web. 16 Mar. 2013.
- NEA Research. *The Benefits Of Second Language Study*. Issue brief. NEA, Dec. 2007. Web. 16 Mar. 2013
- Redbord, Britton, and Rachel Sachetti. "Language Immersion Programs." *PBS*. PBS, Nov. 2003. Web. 16 Mar. 2013
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TESTIMONY to the Senate Committee Education

S.C.R. 109 and S.C. 75

Requesting the Department of Education to Support the Creation of Foreign Language Immersion Classes in Public Elementary Schools

Friday, March 22, 2013
2:05 PM -- Conference Room Auditorium

Submitted in **OPPOSITION** by Mary Smart, Mililani, HI

Chairwoman Tokuda, Vice-Chair Kidani, Chairman English, Vice-Chair Dela Cruz and Committee Members

1. An October [2011 Hawaii Reporter](#) article provided the dismal statistics regarding the ability of Hawai'i students to read as " In 2007, the latest data available, Hawaii scores a 29 percent in math and a 39 percent in reading." and " When Hawaii students scores are compared to their peers in Canada, Hawaii drops to a 20 percent in math and 28 percent in reading." It is obvious more time has to be spent in English immersion classes for students to achieve their goals. It is especially important that immigrants immerse themselves in English classes to facilitate their assimilation into our local culture and continue the success of the "melting pot".
2. Hawaii's [BOE/DOE Strategic Plan 2011 - 2018](#) (updated 2012) shows Hawaii schools need radical improvement in the educational programs already in place. Schools accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) was reported to be an embarrassing 38% in 2012. This is not the time to take on new challenges.
3. Hawai'i already has [Hawaiian immersion schools](#). Hawaiian is an official language of the state for those desiring their children to be immersed in a language other than English. We don't need more language barriers.
4. Many bills considered this legislative session mentioned the need for more revenue (taxes). The DOE may face [budget cuts](#). It is grossly irresponsible to propose language immersion classes that are likely more harmful than helpful. Many people in Hawai'i already speak a language other than English in their home. Speaking and reading English is important for future success. [Hawaii Literacy](#) newsletter from 2009 reports "43% of Americans with the lowest literacy skills live in poverty. 70% of people with the lowest literacy skills have no full or part time job. Adult illiteracy costs society an estimated \$225 billion each year in lost productivity, unrealized tax revenues, welfare, crime, poverty and related social ills. About 70% of men and women in prison are functionally illiterate. Over 155 thousand adults in Hawaii an estimated 16% are functionally illiterate." Literacy in English is a serious problem that needs to be solved for the residents of Hawai'i. Foreign language skills are nice to have but we can't afford to add to the programs our schools already offer.