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# HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO  
REINFORCE INSTRUCTION REGARDING AMERICAN CIVICS.

1           WHEREAS, Act 51, Session Laws of Hawaii 2004, declares that  
2 "ultimately education must do no less than advance the endowment  
3 of human culture itself, so that each succeeding generation  
4 finds itself further along the road towards peace, social  
5 justice, and environmental sustainability in a society guided by  
6 creativity, compassion, and curiosity"; and

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8           WHEREAS, current efforts in educational reform from  
9 kindergarten through grade 12, both in Hawaii and nationally,  
10 focus predominantly on students' academic performance and  
11 college and workplace readiness and overlook the concept that  
12 actively preparing students to be engaged, productive citizens  
13 is one of the foundational purposes of public education in the  
14 United States; and

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16           WHEREAS, such an exclusive focus on achievement in English  
17 language arts, mathematics, and science by students neglects a  
18 key purpose of public education, which is to create an informed,  
19 participating citizenry; and

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21           WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Horace Mann, and the  
22 framers of our nation all espoused free, universal public  
23 education as a key element necessary to maintain the integrity  
24 of a representative democracy; and

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26           WHEREAS, our democratic republic will be sustained when  
27 young people are aware of their changing cultural and physical  
28 environments; know the past; read, write and think deeply; and  
29 act in ways that promote the common good; and

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31           WHEREAS, there may always be differing perspectives on  
32 these objectives, but the goal of producing knowledgeable,  
33 reflective, and active citizens is universal; and



1 WHEREAS, research has demonstrated that there is a call for  
2 students to become more prepared for the challenges of college,  
3 career, and civic life (Bellanca and Brandt, 2010; DiGiacomo,  
4 Linn, Monthey, Pack, and Wyatt, 2013; Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup>  
5 Century Schools, 2011); and  
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7 WHEREAS, public schools remain the best avenue to ensure  
8 that citizens are prepared to possess the knowledge, skills,  
9 dispositions, and opportunities to practice productive  
10 participation in the processes and experiences of civic life,  
11 including political engagement, community service, and  
12 altruistic behaviors; and  
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14 WHEREAS, these skills and actions of civic engagement in a  
15 representative democracy cannot be taught only by giving  
16 information and completing written tests but must also be  
17 developed through direct instruction and involvement in  
18 simulations of democratic processes and the problem-solving  
19 process of addressing community issues by all age groups; and  
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21 WHEREAS, a strong academic program of social sciences,  
22 including civics, together with the integration of democratic  
23 processes and simulations at all levels within the public-school  
24 system can enhance free society as a whole in Hawaii and  
25 nationally as well as within individual students in a reciprocal  
26 way; and  
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28 WHEREAS, more than ever, youth need the intellectual power  
29 to recognize societal problems; ask pertinent questions and  
30 develop robust investigations into them; consider possible  
31 solutions and consequences; and act upon what they learn with  
32 the capability and commitment to repeat that process as long as  
33 necessary to navigate successfully through the worlds of  
34 college, career, and civic life; and  
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36 WHEREAS, the Strategic Plan (2011-2018) of the Department  
37 of Education specifically states in the section on Core Values  
38 that "Hawaii students value connections (with the environment, a  
39 larger community and a global society) and become stewards to  
40 help make our world a better place"; and



1           WHEREAS, Objective 1C of the same Strategic Plan states  
2 that "students are connected to their school and community to  
3 develop love of learning and contribute to a vibrant civic  
4 life"; now, therefore,  
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6           BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
7 Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular  
8 Session of 2014, that the Department of Education is strongly  
9 urged to strengthen and reinforce the civic readiness,  
10 education, and engagement of students from kindergarten through  
11 grade 12 in all public schools; and  
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13           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is  
14 also urged to enhance social-studies courses and integrate  
15 content, processes, strategies, and proven practices in civic  
16 education within each public school to expand the knowledge,  
17 skills, and capabilities of public-school students in  
18 kindergarten through grade 12 to be informed, active citizens  
19 participating in an integrated world; and  
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21           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
22 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of  
23 Education, Superintendent of Education, President of the Hawaii  
24 State Teachers Association, Executive Director of the Hawaii  
25 Government Employees Association, State Executive Director of  
26 the Hawaii Elementary and Middle School Administrators'  
27 Association, Chair of the Education Commission of the States and  
28 National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, Chair of the  
29 Board of Directors of the Center for Civic Education, and  
30 Executive Director of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of  
31 Schools.

