

Senator David Y. Ige, Chair Senate Committee on Education State Capitol Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 2134 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

Dear Chair Ige and Members of the Committee, I am writing this letter as a parent of a child who qualifies and receives special educational services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in support of SB 2134 which amends Section 302A-101 of Hawaii Revised Statutes to bring Hawaii's age limit for students with disabilities receiving special education services into compliance with the IDEA.

If the stated purpose of this legislation is to comply with IDEA, I agree with testimony previously submitted from Special Education Advisory Council of Hawaii that strongly recommends that the definition of "exceptional children" in Section 2 be stricken and replaced with the following adaptation of the definition of a "student with a disability" found in Hawaii's administrative rules for the provision of a free appropriate public education for a student with a disability in accordance with IDEA--Chapter 60. The term "exceptional children" is no longer used by the federal government to describe children with disabilities. The current language in Section 302A-101 in its use of "exceptional children" speaks of exclusion and the inability of students with disabilities to benefit from "ordinary instructional methods." These descriptions are offensive to the disability community and contrary to the spirit of IDEA. More to the point, they are out of sync with Chapter 60, signed into law in November 2009.