



Friday, February 7, 2014
1:30 PM
Conference Room 414

TESTIMONY TO
THE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON EDUCATION

RE: SB 2423 – Relating to the Department of Education

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Witt, Executive Director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 99 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 33,000 students statewide.

HAIS is in strong support of SB 2423 which allows the Department of Education to accept gifts or donations to enhance the school environment for the betterment of student learning and also allows schools or classes to fundraise in conjunction with a 501(c)(3) organization.

As you already know, the price of a high quality education is quite lofty and funding for education, without fail, falls well short of what is necessary to provide the learning experiences that are crucial for increased student success in school and life. The per pupil allocation of funds provided by the state currently only covers a percentage of the cost to educate an individual.

It is therefore imperative that the department be allowed to accept donations or gifts that go toward the improvement of the school environment to help subsidize the cost. It is also equally important that individual schools and classes are likewise allowed to participate in fundraising activities to benefit student learning.

Our private schools rely heavily on fundraising activities such as capital campaigns or various fundraisers for student scholarships; this has proven to be a very effective way of supplementing the cost of education.

The education of our keiki is one of the best investments that we can make to ensure a quality future for our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.