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**TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 103, REQUESTING THE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE TO  
REINTRODUCE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Hon. Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
Hon. Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, April 21, 2016, 9:00 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

Honorable Chair Tokuda and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that boasts over 350 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony **in support of** HCR 103, requesting the Department of Education to establish a task force to reintroduce vocational programs at public schools.

In recent years, education rhetoric has revolved around the misguided notion of “college and career readiness,” a banner phrase for preparing all students to attend universities. Yet, today, college affordability is at an all-time low, student debt at an all-time high, and vocational skills found wanting by employers. According to the Hawai‘i Department of Labor, more than 72 percent of the state’s projected openings through 2022 require a high school diploma or less, while only 15 percent of future openings require a bachelor’s degree and only 4 percent require a master’s, doctoral, or professional degree. Thus, to truly promote “college and ***career*** readiness,” we must invest in vocational and career pathway programming, in which students may learn such vocations as animation, emergency medical services, environmental sciences, marketing, culinary skills, engineering, and, ironically, elementary and secondary education.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify **in support of** this resolution.

Sincerely,  
Kris Coffield  
*Executive Director*  
IMUAlliance