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February 11, 2015
1:15 PM
Conference Room 229

To: Senate Committee on Education
Sen. Michelle Kidani, Chair
Sen. Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
President Keli'i Akina, Ph.D.

RE: SB 361 -- RELATING TO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
Comments Only

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer its comments on SB 361, which would allow home schooled students to participate in extracurricular activities at the public school they would otherwise have attended.

With this bill, Hawaii would join the increasing number of states that are working to grant equal access to extracurricular and enriching activities to home schooled students. This is a question of fairness, offering education options to parents while ensuring that children still have the opportunity to grow their talents and abilities to the utmost.

It is worth remembering that homeschooling families pay the same taxes to support public education as everyone else and should therefore be able to make use of the public facilities and services that they would otherwise be entitled to. For those who are concerned about the possible effect of an influx of homeschooled students in public school extracurricular activities, it has been found that in states granting equal access, only 3-5% of homeschoolers participate. In short, this is a chance to do something that encourages inclusiveness in the local school community, and is unlikely to include significant costs for the school.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Sincerely,
Keli'i Akina, Ph.D.
President, Grassroot Institute of Hawaii