

# SCR43-SCR21

Measure Title: REQUESTING THE STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA GRANTING PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR ADULT LEARNERS.

Report Title: High School Diploma Program for Adult Learners; State Public Charter School Commission; Working Group

Description:

Companion:

Package: None

Current Referral: EDU

Introducer(s): KIDANI, BAKER, GALUTERIA, K.KAHELE, KEITH-AGARAN, NISHIHARA, Ihara, Riviere



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/14/2016  
**Time:** 01:25 PM  
**Location:** 229  
**Committee:** Senate Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Resolution:** SCR 043/SR 21 REQUESTING THE STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA GRANTING PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR ADULT LEARNERS.

**Purpose of  
Resolution:**

**Department's Position:**

The Department of Education (Department) recognizes the intent of SCR 043/SR 21 requesting the State Public Charter School Commission to convene a working group to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a high school diploma granting public charter school program for adult learners.

Upon successful fulfillment of graduation requirements via the General Education Development (GED), Competency-Based Community School Diploma Program, or High School Equivalency Test (HiSET), graduates from the Department's Community Schools for Adults receive the Hawaii Adult Community School Diploma (HACSD).

Since the Community Schools for Adults generally fulfills the need for a diploma for adult learners, the Department respectfully suggests that a formal working group is unnecessary. However, the Department is willing to engage in a discussion and meet with the State Public Charter School Commission and stakeholders to further explore this proposal and the challenges therein.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SCR 043/SR 21.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



CATHERINE PAYNE  
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII  
**STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION**  
**(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)**

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>  
1111 Bishop Street, Suite 516, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

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FOR: SCR 43/SR 21 Requesting the State Public Charter School Commission to Convene a Working Group to Evaluate the Feasibility of Establishing a High School Diploma Granting Public Charter School Program for Adult Learners

DATE: Monday, March 14, 2016

TIME: 1:25 PM

COMMITTEE(S): Senate Committee on Education

ROOM: Conference Room 229

FROM: Yvonne Lau, Interim Executive Director  
State Public Charter School Commission

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**Comments in support of the intent of SCR 43/SR 21**

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

The State Public Charter School Commission supports the intent of the resolution and appreciates the opportunity to participate in a discussion on how public charter schools can contribute in alternative ways to public education in Hawaii. The Commission, however, would not proceed without working closely with the Department of Education and other stakeholders.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



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Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

March 11, 2016

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair  
Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair  
Members, Senate Committee on Education

From: Judy Oliveira, PhD  
Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs  
University of Hawaii, West Oahu

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Judy Oliveira'.

***Testimony in Support of SCR43, Relating to Charter School for Adult Learners***

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 43, which requests the convening of a working group to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a high school diploma granting public charter school for adult learners.

Since its establishment in 1976, UH West Oahu has offered a baccalaureate education for students in the fastest growing region on Oahu through a curriculum that emphasizes professional, applied science, humanities, and social science programs. The only public university located on the west side of Oahu, UH West Oahu has evolved to a four-year student-centered, indigenous-serving institution offering six bachelor's degree programs in 33 areas of study and seven certificate programs.

Through my extensive work with students at UH West Oahu, and my previous tenure at Windward Community College, I have gained firsthand insight into the challenges faced in achieving educational success, and which strategies would best help our residents overcome these challenges to thrive in education, employment, and beyond. The opportunity for a charter school that grants high school diplomas to adults is an exciting one – I truly believe that a high school diploma most promisingly places an individual on track to succeed in post-secondary education, and thus be able to succeed in a career enabling self-sufficiency.

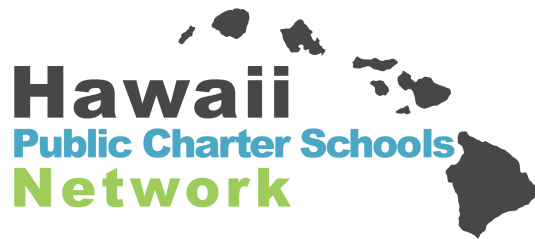
A myriad of research has proven a high school diploma more valuable than a G.E.D. – a diploma leads to higher mean earnings, significantly better success in the post-secondary environment, and overall better health and social outcomes. There is a dire need for this type of program in Hawaii. Overall, nearly 15% of our State's high school youth dropped out of school in the 2013-2014 year<sup>i</sup>. A charter school that would bridge this gap – awarding a diploma to adults – will also address the economic needs of our state: By 2020, only 25% of job openings will not require a high school diploma<sup>ii</sup>.

The concept supported by this Resolution is a viable solution to serve our State's most at-risk residents; I lend my strong support to this Resolution.

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<sup>i</sup> [http://arch.k12.hi.us/PDFs/trends/2014/Act51\\_State.pdf](http://arch.k12.hi.us/PDFs/trends/2014/Act51_State.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> [nationalskillscoalition.org](http://nationalskillscoalition.org)



March 11, 2016

To: Honorable Michelle Kidani, Chair  
Honorable Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair  
Senate Education Committee

From: Jeannine Souki, Executive Director  
Hawaii Public Charter Schools Network

**Re: SCR 43/SR 21- REQUESTING THE STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA GRANTING PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR ADULT LEARNERS. – SUPPORT Conference Room 224 – Hawaii State Capitol – Mar 14, 2016, 1:25 P.M.**

On behalf of the Hawaii Public Charter School Network (HPCSN), we are submitting support testimony for SCR 43/SR 21 – Requesting the State Public Charter School Commission to convene a working group to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a high school diploma granting public charter school program for adult learners.

In Hawaii nearly one in five students do not graduate from high school. A high school graduate generally earns higher wages than someone who didn't graduate from high school. In 2014, the average full time high school graduate earned \$664 a week, while their non-graduate counterpart earned \$491 a week. Workers with a bachelor's degree earned an average of \$1,131 a week, an even greater jump.

This initiative is a much-needed step to provide options for adult learners who want to earn a high school diploma rather than a GED, as there is a higher value for lifetime earnings with a high school degree.

HPCSN works to support public charter schools in Hawaii and to be a voice for children and families that seek choice in an independent public school setting. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of HPCSN.

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair  
Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair  
Members, Senate Committee on Education

From: Laura Smith, President/CEO  
Wanda Villareal, Vice-President, Mission Services  
Goodwill Hawaii

Date: March 14, 2016

Re: **Testimony in Support of SCR43, Relating to Charter School for Adult Learners**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 43, which is requesting to convene a working group to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a high school diploma granting public charter school for adult learners.

Goodwill Industries of Hawaii, Inc. (Goodwill) is among the largest human service non-profit organizations in Hawaii. Our mission is to help people find and succeed in employment, enabling their self-sufficiency. Last year, Goodwill served over 11,000 people, placing almost 1,500 into jobs in our community. Many of our program participants are unemployed or underemployed adults who have dropped out of high school; due to the age cap, they can no longer obtain their high school diploma. Overall, 14.5% of our State's population dropped out of school in the 2013-2014 year<sup>i</sup>.

***This lack of diploma gravely affects the ability to obtain employment at a self-sustaining wage.*** In looking toward Hawaii's economic future, we must ensure our workforce is prepared for the projected labor market needs: ***By 2020, only 25% of job openings will not require a high school diploma<sup>ii</sup>.***

Goodwill also understands that various social issues such as health disparities, crime, substance abuse, employment and poverty are all intricately linked to educational achievement. High school dropouts have worse health, lower incomes, and fewer job opportunities than the general population. Further, high school dropouts are more likely to be recipients of government welfare, and are eight times more likely to be incarcerated, than those with high school diplomas.

Adults without a high school diploma may obtain a GED; however, a GED does not result in equivalent outcomes as the attainment of a high school diploma: Research has shown the health and economic outcomes of GED certificate holders look no different than high school dropouts.

- Individuals with a high school diploma earn \$1,600 more in mean monthly earnings than those with a GED<sup>iii</sup>.
- Less than 5% of GED holders receive a bachelor's degree, compared to 33% of those with diplomas<sup>iv</sup>.
- The military limits the number accepted, and requires higher scores on aptitude tests, of GED holders, because the military dropout rate for GED holders is 45% compared to 24% for high school graduates<sup>v</sup>.

Our past and current work with adults has led Goodwill both at a local level and a national level to seek better educational outcomes for the people we serve, which is why we strongly support this resolution – which would create an opportunity for adults to obtain their high school diploma,

and lead to proven positive immediate and long-term benefits on both the individual and communities as a whole. Other states have experienced tremendous success at awarding diplomas and certifications for adult learners. Enabling such an opportunity would have a resounding impact on our residents' educational and employment trajectories by affording individuals who dropped out of high school a second chance at earning a diploma and being a contributing member of society.

Goodwill advocates for these same opportunities within our State and asks for your support through the passage of this measure.

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<sup>i</sup> [http://arch.k12.hi.us/PDFs/trends/2014/Act51\\_State.pdf](http://arch.k12.hi.us/PDFs/trends/2014/Act51_State.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> [nationalskillscoalition.org](http://nationalskillscoalition.org)

<sup>iii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau

<sup>iv</sup> U.S. Census Bureau

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.thebestschools.org/degrees/high-school-diploma-versus-ged/>

Terri Fujii  
919 Kahena Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96825

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chairperson Education Committee

From: Terri Fujii,

Date: March 11, 2016

Re: **Testimony in Support of SCR43, Relating to Charter School for Adult Learners**

I am writing today in my capacity as a board member of Goodwill Industries of Hawaii to express support for SCR43 which would allow adults, over the age of 20 years old to obtain a High School Diploma rather than a GED (General Education Diploma).

The difference between obtaining a GED and a High School diploma can be significant for many adult learners. They have better opportunities for increased earnings, greater access to post-secondary and technical education and great acceptance into a military career.

In a national effort, Goodwill is working to help to prevent poverty through increased education and career options. This approach has been implemented in several states across the US, such as in Indiana; Texas, and Arkansas who all report positive success.

When adult learners are awarded diplomas, there is a positive impact on their educational and employment trajectories by affording individuals who dropped out of high school a second chance at earning a diploma and being a contributing member of society.

Establishing a working group to examine this impact and how it might benefit the residents of Hawaii would help to further identify the positive effects of a high school diploma vs. a GED, and allow our adult learners to earn a credential that will have substantial meaning throughout their career paths.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these views.