



**LATE**

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**TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 2117, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO  
STANDARDIZED TESTING**

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Hon. Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Hon. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, March 29, 2018, 10:50 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

Honorable Chair Dela Cruz and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMU Alliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 400 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in strong support of House Bill 2117, HD 1, relating to standardized testing.

Life is not a standardized test. Yet, the overuse and abuse of standardized tests in Hawai'i's schools has become an epidemic. Rather than focus on student learning, our schools devote increasing amounts of time to “test and punish” frameworks, in which critical thinking and applied knowledge are replaced with rote test-taking skills that adversely impact a teacher's or schools’ statistical assessment. According to the American Federation of Teachers report “Testing More, Teaching Less: What America's Obsession with Student Testing Costs in Money and Lost Instructional Time,” test preparation and testing in heavily tested districts can absorb up to a month and a half of school time. The grade-by-grade analysis found that students spend from 60 to more than 110 hours per year on test preparation, at an estimated cost per pupil of \$700 to \$1,000 in heavily tested grades (in Hawai’i, each test, itself, costs \$65, discounting resources and personnel needed to administer each test). At the same time, abandoning so-called “toxic testing” could add 20 to 40 minutes of daily instructional time to secondary school grades, according to the report, with hundreds of dollars per student—and millions of dollars overall—reallocated to the purchase of instructional programs, school technology, infrastructure upgrades, and teacher pay increases. Notably, American students take over 100 standardized tests between pre-kindergarten classes and 12th grade, according to a 2015 study by the Council of Great City Schools. **In contrast, many countries that outperform the U.S. on international exams, like the Program for International Student Assessment, test students only three times during the course of their academic careers.**

Make no mistake, when we discuss standardized tests, we're talking about the Common Cor(porat)e State Standards Initiative, a set of corporatized standards that were foisted upon teachers and children across the nation without prior field testing. Developed by an organization called Achieve and the National Governors Association, and funded by the Gates Foundation, the standards were crafted with minimal public input. Under the Obama Administration's Race to the Top grant program, states were effectively told that if they did not adopt the Common Core, they would not be eligible to receive a portion of the program's \$4.35 billion in grant money. As education policy expert Diane Ravitch has said, "Federal law prohibits the U.S. Department of Education from prescribing curriculum, but in this case the Department figured out a clever way to avoid the letter of the law." The result? A precipitous decline in test scores based on Common Core's arbitrary cut scores, a lack of critical thinking development based on Common Core's arbitrary pedagogical instructional time ratios, disproportionate harm caused to English Language Learners and low-income students, further elimination of arts education, and parents and students across the nation joining the United Opt Out movement against the Smarter Balanced Assessment associated with Common Core, with students—including those in Hawai'i—literally "opting out" of toxic high-stakes tests. Both former President Obama and the U.S. Department of Education have called for an end to overtesting, with Obama calling for testing time to be capped at no more than 2 percent of student instructional time. Even the Gates Foundation, the alchemists responsible for the Common Core monstrosity, have backpedaled on their Frankensteinian experiment, calling for a moratorium on linking Common Core to teacher evaluations and their related "value-added method" of measuring performance.

Now, we have hope. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act provides states with increased flexibility in the use of standardized testing, including eliminating federally mandated inclusion of standardized tests in teacher evaluations, and allowing states to choose what test to use for annual school assessments. ESSA also permits states to limit the amount of time that students spend preparing for and taking standardized tests, provides funding to states for auditing and streamlining assessment systems, and, importantly, establishes an "innovative assessment pilot program" through which states may receive permission to connect authentic assessments with real-world learning. In fact, **the Hawai'i State Department of Education is in the process of submitting its application to be one of seven states participating in the pilot program.** We can abolish the "test and punish" education culture that subjugates our teachers and students to educational automation. We must move quickly to set them free.

Toxic testing undermines our schools' curricula, our teachers' autonomy, and our students' creativity. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely,  
Kris Coffield  
*Executive Director*  
IMUAlliance

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**HB-2117-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 8:46:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/29/2018 10:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Mitsuko Hayakawa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

TO: TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

RE: HB 2117, HD 1 Relating to Standardized Testing

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Hello,

I am Jeraldyn Deseo, a student from the Myron B. Thompson School Social Work program at University of Hawaii at Manoa.

I **support** HB 2117, HD1 in limiting the amount of standardized tests a student will take in a school year. As a student who took standardized tests from elementary to high school, I believe that the tests were not a good indication of a student's academic achievement. I feel that in preparing and taking the tests took away from instructional time. In addition, it caused students harmful stress and pressure to demonstrate what they have learned in school. With limiting the amount of standardized testing, teachers will be able to devote more time to their students. I think that HB 2117, HD 1 is a great bill for future students.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jeraldyn Deseo