

February 23, 2018

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Conference Room 211
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813



RE: Testimony on SB 2384, Relating to Education

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christine Sakuda and I serve as the executive director of Transform Hawai'i Government (THG), a coalition of organizations and individuals who believe in improving government services for every Hawai'i resident on every island. THG supports Senate Bill 2384, Relating to Education, which requires the Department of Education to develop a comprehensive plan to integrate design thinking and coding in middle, intermediate, and high school curriculums, and to submit the plan to the Legislature prior to the regular session of 2019.

THG was established to promote an open, transparent and responsive Hawai'i government. We advocate improving government business practices through technology to ensure government employees, residents and businesses have convenient and secure access to reliable information and data on demand. Our goal is to have government services streamlined, integrated and delivered in ways that exceed the expectations of the public and the needs of Hawai'i businesses.

We therefore support the passage of SB 2384 because it will facilitate the development of our state's future information technology workforce and position Hawai'i's own students as competitive leaders in highly skilled positions within the public and private sectors.

According to Code.org: "Computer science drives innovation in the U.S. economy and society. Despite growing demand for jobs in the field, it remains marginalized throughout the U.S. K-12 education system."

This is true in Hawai'i but does not have to remain so. In fact, SB 2384 presents an opportunity for Hawai'i to become a leader among states by proactively integrating coding into lesson plans. The earlier students are introduced to coding, the more comfortable and prepared they are when they encounter more complex and in-depth learning experiences in college and workplace training. In addition, early exposure to coding promotes a view among children that computers are more than toys and sources of entertainment but also valuable resources and tools.

Moreover, exposure to design thinking principles will likewise encourage students to embrace creative strategies in problem-solving, which will aid them in school, social and future career contexts.

According to “Computational Participation: Understanding Coding as an Extension of Literacy Instruction” (Burke, O’Byrne, & Kafai, 2016, p. 372): “Coding is the veritable new literacy of the 21st century. Just as reading and writing were once the demarcation line between the literate and illiterate, so now is the capacity to code.”

Ultimately, integrating coding, as well as design thinking, will serve to better prepare Hawai‘i’s keiki to be more than just consumers of technology, but also creators and productive members of the workforce of tomorrow.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important bill.