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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION

RE: SCR 162/SR 121 - REQUESTING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO  
ESTABLISH A PROCESS WHEREBY THE PUBLIC MAY PETITION THE  
BOARD TO ADD ITEMS TO THE AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2018

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports SCR 162/SR121**, requesting the Board of Education to establish a process whereby the public may petition the board to add items to the agenda of the next meeting.

The Hawai'i State Board of Education is responsible for setting public policy that determine the course of our children's future. When the board makes a decision, all public school students—nearly 180,000 keiki—are affected, along with the teachers, administrators, and staff tasked with delivering a quality learning experience.

Too often, though, community members, including teachers and parents, are absent from public education decision-making because they have no role in setting the board's agenda. Teachers, especially, should be empowered to influence the board's concerns, since they are the professionals who most directly impact and interact with Hawai'i's student population. Providing a pathway for teachers to petition the board regarding their concerns will ensure that the classroom experience—from class sizes to educational technology to mandated curricula—is reflected on the board's agenda.

To promote community engagement in education governance, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this resolution.



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## COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, March 28, 2018, 2:50 p.m. Room 229  
SCR 162 / SR 121 RELATING TO EDUCATION  
TESTIMONY

Janet Mason, Legislative Co-Chair, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Kidani, Vice-Chair Kahele and Committee Members:

**The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports SCR 162 / SR 121 that would require the Board of Education to have a process whereby the public may petition to add items to their agenda of the next meeting.**

The League supports the public's rights and interest concerning the administration, policy setting and budget making for our statewide school system; this is important whether we have an elected or appointed Board of Education. We believe the proposed measure is consistent with Chapter 92 Section 302A-124 HRS and the Board's By-Laws.

Now, the public is permitted to testify at Full Board of Education meetings, but only for items that already appear on the agenda, which has been set by the Board in advance of the meeting. We request this bill be amended, as necessary, so it is clear that every meeting of the full Board would have an agenda item titled "Open Forum" or "Community Items," so that the Board routinely solicits public proposals for future agenda items. This would permit greater transparency because minutes of the Board meeting would include the proposed agenda items that had been suggested.

At a subsequent Board meeting the full Board could then act on any open "Community Items." Making decisions on suggested items at the subsequent meeting would guarantee that the suggested items appeared on the public agenda for this meeting, when the Board could make decisions on suggested items. While this would not guarantee inclusion on the agenda of the



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items proposed by the public under the 'Open Forum' or 'Community Items' area, it would create a venue for the public to present suggestions of items for discussion.

**A public hearing is primarily intended to obtain public testimony or comment before important decisions are made. By not allowing the public full access to make comments, the Board of Education runs the risk of making decisions without receiving what could be important input to the decision-making process.**

We support the Board's current instructions for submitting written testimony and testifying in person at Board meetings and do not believe the proposed change would interfere with the general business of the Board.

We urge you to pass this Resolution. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



## Native Hawaiian Education Council

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March 27, 2018

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Kaiali'i Kahele, Vice Chair  
State of Hawai'i Senate  
Senate Committee on Education

Via: Electronic Upload

**RE: SCR162-SR121 - REQUESTING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH A PROCESS WHEREBY THE PUBLIC MAY PETITION THE BOARD TO ADD ITEMS TO THE AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Aloha 'olua mai,

The Native Hawaiian Education Council (NHEC or the Council) supports both the intent and action of the above measure based on our Native Hawaiian Education Platform *to **Intensify Systems Engagement - Actions that intensify systems level action--federal, state, primary, secondary, tertiary, national and international, health, housing—to strengthen families and communities.***

We believe the simple petition process provides an avenue for direct communication from families and communities throughout our island State and is an example of citizen, community based communication mechanisms with the State's education policy makers. In addition, we commend the Board for its efforts to hold meetings outside of the urban core on O'ahu and on neighbor islands during times that are more accessible for stakeholders that are impacted by education policy and policy makers.

The Native Hawaiian Education Council was established in 1994 under the federal Native Hawaiian Education Act. The Council is charged with coordinating, assessing and reporting and making recommendations on the effectiveness of existing education programs for Native Hawaiians, the state of present Native Hawaiian education efforts, and improvements that may be made to existing programs, policies, and procedures to improve the educational attainment of Native Hawaiians.

Please feel free to contact the Council's Executive Director, Dr. Sylvia Hussey, directly via e-mail ([sylvia@nhec.org](mailto:sylvia@nhec.org)), office (808.523.6432) with any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa M. Watkins-Victorino, Chair

cc: Policy & Advocacy and Executive Committees and staff

