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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
LOWER & HIGHER EDUCATION

RE: HCR 169/HR 151 - REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION CONTRACT WITH A THIRD-PARTY CONSULTANT THAT
SPECIALIZES IN SCHOOL FINANCE TO STUDY THE ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC
EDUCATION FUNDING IN HAWAII

MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2019

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports** HCR 169/HR 151, requesting that the Department of Education contract with a third-party consultant that specializes in school finance to study the adequacy of public education funding in Hawaii.

In recent years, state legislatures, state education departments and advocacy groups in more than 30 states have sponsored education adequacy studies to objectively determine the funding levels needed to educate all children to high standards. These professional studies have introduced transparency and rigor to a previously opaque and often arbitrary process.

Providing lawmakers with the very best, most accurate and most reliable data is an imperative first step to help them plan for funding allocations that will concentrate efforts to improve the quality of education our students deserve.

Supporting a school funding adequacy study using the Evidence-Based Method will determine what it will truly cost to educate all public school students in Hawai'i, regardless of income, location, learning challenges or other circumstances.

Adequacy studies are rigorously being used to lay the groundwork for long-term, meaningful school improvement by determining where resources should be allocated, based on the best educational research, that will help all students achieve and succeed, whether that means college, technical training, apprenticeships or jobs right after graduation. An adequacy study will help determine the true cost of



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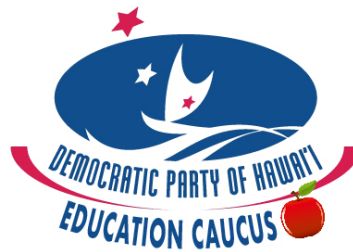
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providing a high-quality education to all of our children in Hawaii in our public schools.

An adequacy study would take into consideration what is needed at a school based on poverty, districts of varying sizes, types of schools (elementary, middle, high school), plus the size of the school, and whether it is in a geographically isolated district such as Lanai and Hana. It will also consider what resources, including certified teachers and support staff, are needed, to help focus on all students including those with special needs, English Language Learners, and at-risk students. The study will provide lawmakers with the foundation for any potential school funding allocations to get the most bang for the buck, so to speak. It has worked for other states, such as Washington, recently, and it is time for Hawaii to take a closer look at our funding for our public schools, especially when it comes to resource allocations.

The Hawaii State Teachers Association asks that your committee to **support** HCR 169/HR 151.



**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 169/HOUSE RESOLUTION 151,
REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CONTRACT WITH A
THIRD-PARTY CONSULTANT THAT SPECIALIZES IN SCHOOL FINANCE TO
STUDY THE ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION FINANCE IN HAWAII**

MARCH 18, 2019 · HOUSE LOWER AND HIGHER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE · CHAIR REP. JUSTIN H.
WOODSON

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus supports HCR 169/HR 151, which requests that the Department of Education contract with a third-party consultant that specializes in school finance to study the adequacy of public education finance in Hawai'i.

As you are aware, the Hawai'i Supreme Court invalidated the proposed constitutional amendment to increase school funding by placing a surcharge on residential investment property. While we are disappointed by the Court's ruling, the Caucus is continuing the fight to deliver the schools our keiki deserve.

To that end, we support legislation to initiate an adequacy study of Hawai'i's public school system. Pioneered by leading school finance experts like Picus Odden and Associates, an adequacy study is an evidence-based analysis of education funding to determine what resources are needed, and in what amount, to provide every student with an equal educational opportunity.

Adequacy studies have been performed in numerous states across the nation, including Oregon, Washington, Vermont, Arkansas, and Texas. One preferred method employed in adequacy studies is the Evidence-Based Model, which reviews educational research to identify strategies that show evidence of improving student learning, then estimates the resources needed at a prototypical school to implement those strategies and extrapolates resource costs to the district level.

According to Picus Odden and Associates, a comprehensive adequacy study for our state of our size would cost approximately \$200,000, depending upon the scope of the request. Moreover, an adequacy study could address issues of teacher recruitment and retention, including how salary and other compensation enhancements may contribute to resolving Hawai'i's teacher shortage crisis.

While the death of the constitutional amendment still stings, we cannot give up the quest for a fully-funded school system. Our children's future depends on our resolve.