



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

Date: 03/18/2019
Time: 02:45 PM
Location: 229
Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: SCR 010 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF UPDATING "HAWAII SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND" TO "HAWAII SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF" TO REDUCE CONFUSION AND IDENTIFY WHERE STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND MAY ACCESS APPROPRIATE RESOURCES AND SERVICES.

Purpose of Resolution:

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) opposes SCR 10 to update "Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind" to "Hawaii School for the Deaf" to reduce confusion and help identify where students who are blind may access appropriate resources and services.

A change in the name would be restrictive and limit the array of placement options for students with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

The Hawaii State Department of Education seeks to advance the goals of the Strategic Plan which is focused on student success, staff success, and successful systems of support. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129 • TTY (808) 586-8162

March 18, 2019

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senate Concurrent Resolution 10 and Senate Resolution 9 – Requesting the Department of Education to Explore the Possibility of Updating “Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind” to “Hawaii School for the Deaf” to Reduce Confusion and Identify Where Students Who May Be Blind May Access Appropriate Resources and Services

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports SCR 10/SR 9 which requests the Department of Education to explore the possibility of updating the name of “Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind” to “Hawaii School for the Deaf.”

Although the school was originally established to serve students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or deaf-blind, the population at the school no longer includes students who are blind. Students who are blind are attending public schools in their own districts. The school can serve students who are deaf-blind but currently has no such students, however that may not always be the case.

With the present population of deaf and hard of hearing students, it appears as if the school’s primary purpose is to serve students who are deaf or hard of hearing whose primary language is American Sign Language. The school does however still house resources and services for students who are blind, such as a library of Braille and enlarged print books, assistive devices, orientation and mobility services, and Braille training.

The Department of Education may consider establishing a working group to assess whether it is appropriate to change the name of the school. The working group should consist of members from the Department of Education as well as members from the deaf and blind communities that the name change may impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director

Democratic Party of Hawai'i
O'ahu County Committee
Affirmative Action Committee

Testimony in Support of SR9/SCR10

Requesting the Dept of Education to Explore the Possibility of Updating "Hawai'i School for the Deaf and the Blind" to "Hawai'i School for the Deaf" to Reduce Confusion and Identify Where Students Who are Blind May Access Appropriate Resources and Services

Committee on Education

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Hearing: March 18, 2:45 p.m., Conf Rm 229

Aloha, Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee on Education

The Affirmative Action Committee of the Oahu County Committee, Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports SR9/SCR10. This resolution helps to clarify that blind keiki cannot get services at the Hawai'i School for the Deaf and Blind. Far too many blind children and adults are referred to the Hawai'i School for the Deaf and the Blind, but they cannot help them.

Some teachers of the blind in Hawai'i don't even know any of the people who work at the Hawai'i School for the Deaf and Blind. If they don't know each other, attracting people to that school is counter-productive.

Also, many blind people are often asked if they were molested at the School for the Deaf and the Blind because of a sexual assault scandal. Even if they are not asked, this topic comes up and makes people uncomfortable. Since blind people haven't gone to that school for so many decades, they are often shocked by the question and uncomfortable. To help distance them from a scandal that never affected them, it might also help to pass this resolution.

Please pass SR9/SCR10.

Respectfully,

LEIMOMI KHAN

Chair, OCC Affirmative Action Committee

LATE

Testimony of Roderick J. Macdonald

Submitted to the Hawaii Senate, Committee on Education
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Re: SCR10 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF UPDATING "HAWAI'I SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND" TO "HAWAI'I SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF" TO REDUCE CONFUSION AND IDENTIFY WHERE STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND MAY ACCESS APPROPRIATE RESOURCES AND SERVICES.

March 18, 2019 at 2:45 p.m. in conference room 229:

Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, Members:

I am writing to ask that you OPPOSE passage of SCR10.

With the introduction of SCR10, a formal effort has been launched to change the name of the Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind to the Hawaii School for the Deaf. It is my understanding that this effort was undertaken by elements in the Blind community who feel that, since Blind students are no longer educated at this school, "Blind" should be removed from the school's name.

The problem is that HSDB DOES provide the location where DEAF-BLIND students ARE served. Changing the name to the Hawaii School for the Deaf would certainly make it clear where Deaf students go to school; it would enable the Blind community to find other means of identification without the encumbrance of the word "Deaf". But where do DEAF-BLIND students get their education? This Concurrent Resolution, if carried out, would imply to the public that Deaf-Blind students are not educated at this school.

Further, it would educate Deaf-Blind students in a manner subtly (or not) denying their Deaf-Blind identity and telling them they are Deaf only, make the best of it, kid. And it would open the door to bullying - "You aren't Deaf, you don't belong here."

I am myself Deaf-Blind. I have been served by schools for the Blind, schools for the Deaf, and programs for the Deaf-Blind. I have even been served by a program for what is now known as the Developmentally Disabled but was then referred to as the "Retarded". I have had an ample opportunity to learn about finding and respecting one's Identity, and I strongly emphasize to you just how important this is when growing up with a dual disability.

Had this effort sought to change the name of the school to the Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Deaf-Blind I would not object; but as written I strongly believe that it is demeaning to Deaf-Blind people and our sense of who we are and where we belong.

I strongly urge you to OPPOSE this Concurrent Resolution.

Thank you for your support.
Rod Macdonald