

**HB-619**

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 3:38:53 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/9/2021 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| cheryl B.           | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

SUPPORT

There needs to be an overreaching department for Ethnic Studies. There are many encouraging models from around the world as well as from within our schools. Reach out to educators. I personally, can name folks who would be assets to making sure that this would be a successful endeavor.

In addition, when looking at Ethnic studies, we need to continue to push our bilingual advocacy as well as making sure that the state offices carefully vett programs, resources that our students are asked to use. ACELLUS remains a sore point, as it is still being used. All those students exposed to biased materials.

**HB-619**

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 11:05:41 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/9/2021 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jun Shin            | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

This is a great opportunity for students to learn their history and have important conversations on power, gender, race, class, etc.

**HB-619**

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 11:15:06 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/9/2021 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Kelsey Amos         | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

In a multiethnic society like Hawai'i, ethnic studies is so important for students to gain an understanding of themselves and their society. I support.



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

**Date:** 02/09/2021

**Time:** 02:00 PM

**Location:** 309 Via Videoconference

**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** HB 0619 RELATING TO ETHNIC STUDIES.

**Purpose of Bill:** Requires public school students to complete a course in ethnic studies. Requires the superintendent of education to develop a model curriculum in ethnic studies, circulate the curriculum for public comment, and obtain approval of the curriculum from the board of education.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the overall intent of HB 619 and respectfully provides comments.

The Department currently has an Ethnic Studies course within Social Studies for which upon completion, students earn a 0.5 elective credit. This course examines the dynamic interactions among various ethnic groups in American society. It looks at social justice, equity, power, economic parity, and "voice" in terms of ethnicities, minorities, and disenfranchised groups, and critically reviews the differences between "ideal" democracy and the realities of today. The roles, responsibilities, contributions, and realities of living in a multicultural, multi-lingual society are examined. Civic action by students is strongly recommended.

Imposing the requirements contained in this measure may have the unintended consequence of limiting innovation in school design as well as preventing students from enrolling in other elective courses, such as Fine Arts, World Languages, and Computer Science. We urge the legislature to be mindful of these potential impacts.

The Department believes that the existence of the Ethnic Studies course, coupled with the potentially adverse impacts on student choice and school design, warrant caution in

advancing HB 619.

Finally, the Department asks to be allowed to use our curriculum selection process should this bill move forward.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. 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](http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org).