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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION and THE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021

RE: HCR 55 / HR 44 – URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO  
REQUEST A FEDERAL WAIVER FROM STANDARDIZED TESTING  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR.

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson, Chair Tarnas, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** HCR 55/ HR 44, urging the Department of Education to request a federal waiver from standardized testing requirements for the 2020-2021 school year.

Our current testing culture was developed under the federal No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top initiatives, in which test scores were viewed as the best determinant of school performance. **Studies show, however, that test scores strongly correlate with socioeconomic status: rich schools do well, while poor schools struggle. Because of the pressure to perform well on tests and their inability to control the socioeconomic status of their students, struggling schools cut back on arts and cultural education, career and technical courses, electives, and more, so that greater resources could be spent on prepacked programs and consultants meant to boost test scores.**

However, efforts to limit testing have become an accelerating national movement. In October of 2015, former President Barack Obama proposed limiting testing to 2 percent of schools' total instructional time. Since then, numerous states have enacted or are considering enacting similar proposals. In 2018 Maryland passed HB 461, "eliminating more than 700 hours of unnecessary district-mandated testing," according to Maryland State Education Association President Betty Weller. Similarly, Texas and Georgia lawmakers are considering legislation to dramatically slash the number of tests given in their states to increase personalized learning opportunities and broaden curricular offerings. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham ordered the state's Public Education Department to immediately take the steps necessary to terminate New Mexico's use of the Partnership for Assessment of

Readiness for College and Careers standardized test, commonly known as PARCC (similar type of standardized test, based on Common Core, as SBA that we use in Hawaii). Lujan Grisham, in an executive order, called on the department to immediately begin working with key stakeholders to identify and implement a more effective, more appropriate and less intrusive method for assessing school performance that is compliant with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

A typical student takes over 100 mandated standardized tests between pre-kindergarten classes and 12th grade, recent studies have found. These include universal screeners such as STAR, iReady, Achieve 3000 etc. By contrast, **most countries that outperform the United States on international exams test students only three times during their entire school careers.**

This request is to urge the Department of Education to move Hawai'i toward its international peers by requesting a waiver from state testing, to allow our teachers to focus on actual teaching and learning, not test preparation, especially during this pandemic.

Life is not a standardized test. We support the authentic learning experiences happening in our classrooms, currently virtual and in person, for all of our students, not a focus on standardized testing, thus we ask your committee to **support** this resolution to urge the Department of Education to request a federal waiver from standardized testing for this school year.

**HR-44**

Submitted on: 3/9/2021 4:45:56 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/11/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Malia Marquez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Malia Marquez, I'm a former Hawaiian Studies teacher for the DOE Kupuna program. Standardized testing is hard enough on a normal school year, there's no way we should standardize test our kids for this school year 2020/2021. Our poor kids have a hard enough time trying to log in ONLINE everyday! They need a break!! Im against standardized testing and support HR 44.

**HR-44**

Submitted on: 3/10/2021 9:10:49 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/11/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Debbie Anderson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Our outgoing Superintendent Kishimoto agreed in a June 2020 Memorandum of Understanding that the HIDOE would be applying for a testing waiver this SY 2020-21.

The federal DOE's Interim Secretary issued specifics about what type of waiver activity would be granted.

States such as Massachusetts are taking advantage of these offers.

To date, however, Hawaii's DOE seems not to have filed in any form. We are wasting both money and time unnecessarily, as results cannot be used this year to improve instruction. New Jersey students test highest on tests written in New Jersey. Tests results correlate most strongly with Socio-Economic Status (SES), which has taken a severe downturn during covid. Money could be spent better retaining teaching positions.

Parents are concerned about losing more learning time to "tests" which don't meet under covid conditions the accepted criteria of being reliable, valid or fair. Many are writing Principals to ask for their refusal of the SBA test to be respected. Yet their parental rights are being denied, or they are being subjected to disrespectful responses. Given the historical background of testing of eugenics, racial segregation and subjugation of people of color, boycotting this tool is part of our increasing social justice in our school system. With all the stressors of this pandemic, we shouldn't be subjecting our keiki to this unnecessary added stress when their learning time has been limited.

Please pass this resolution to encourage our DOE to hold to their agreement, protect our keiki from unnecessary stress, and safeguard real learning time.

Mahalo!

**HR-44**

Submitted on: 3/10/2021 11:32:54 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/11/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Susan Pcola_Davis	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support the Department of Education requesting a waiver from standardized testing for the school year 2020-2021.

This annual testing is precluded by weeks of test preparation which is stressful for both teachers and students in a "normal" school year. With all the upheaval of this year, concerns for safety, social distancing, adequate PPE and cleaning supplies, budget cuts, teachers fearful of losing their jobs or being placed in another position/location, mixed communication between the state level, complex level and school level directions and actions, it is imperative that adding another layer of stress will just cause more of the same.

Currently complexes and schools have been directed to "bring back as many students to in person instruction" as you can. There are even proposals to decrease the social distancing of 6 feet to "as best as you can."

Contradictions between the constantly changing CDC guidelines and our own DOH guidance, cloud the safety issues that the schools are facing. In an effort to open schools "any way we can," are we throwing out the baby with the bathwater?

At this point in time, the drive to bring back students to in-person instruction appears to be driven by completing these tests.

These tests are not going to tell us any more than we already know. Student's learning has been monitored through the use of IReady for Math and English, since the beginning of the school years. These are called universal screeners. They gauge where a student is on their learning spectrum.

So what are we trying to find out by using a standardized test? Proof that the universal screeners are accurate? Plus or minus 5 confidence level? Does this matter at this time?

The Department of Education has already identified "learning loss" as a manor result of the COVID effect on education for this year. Plans to address this are already being discussed.

Let's please "as least defer" testing as long as possible to give the US Department of Education time to reconsider their stance on standardized testing for this school year. Rather than insisting that the testing be done by a certain date, at least provide an alternative plan to request the extension of completion until the fall. It's the least we can expect, that is in the parameters the US DOE is allowing currently.

Committee on Education  
Rep. Justin Woodson, Chair  
Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

March 10, 2021

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of HR44 Urging the Department of Education to request a federal waiver from standardized testing requirements for the 2020-2021 school year, with amendments offered.

I have been a school testing coordinator for six years and even in our best years, standardized testing is limited in outcomes, especially regarding actionable information that can be quickly and effectively used by teachers to impact student learning. The test results are not sent to schools until the following school year, and provide no information that breaks down a student's scores into the standards benchmarks teachers are required to use in order to adjust their curriculum and instruction to address learning gaps in their classrooms.

The Hawaii Department of education cannot request a blanket waiver as stated by Ian Rosenblum, there are a number of additional flexibility waivers that are available that **MUST** be requested. The immediate request necessary is on **Accountability and School Identification**.

We are inviting states to request a waiver for the 2020-2021 school year of the accountability and school identification requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). A state receiving this waiver would not be required to implement and report the results of its accountability system, including calculating progress toward long-term goals and measurements of interim progress or indicators, or to annually meaningfully differentiate among its public schools using data from the 2020-2021 school year. ***This flexibility would explicitly include waiving the requirement that the Academic Achievement indicator be adjusted to account for a participation rate below 95 percent.*** [emphasis added].

It is an outrage that the Hawaii DOE Assessment section is requiring schools to send a letter with a scheduled testing date to every distance learner family demanding that they come to campus to complete the tests. Although the DOE likes to use average testing times in their justifications, the tests are untimed and students often take more time than the stated average, especially vulnerable students who are most likely to be distance learning for their safety. This stress will lead to invalid and unreliable results and possibly create more of the anxiety that we are most trying to avoid as we end this school year. This position will most likely influence the parent opt-out movement and decrease the total number of students testing in a normal year.

Another waiver that must be requested involves the current test administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment. The federal DOE has stated: "We emphasize the importance of flexibility in the administration

of statewide assessments. A state should use that flexibility to consider: Administering a shortened version of its statewide assessments...” Although the Department has cut the number of questions on both adaptive multiple choice parts of the tests, they have retained the written performance task. This writing task is always questionable, and also takes many students 2-3 hours to complete, usually in 2 sessions. Additionally, it is graded by artificial intelligence which cannot distinguish the nuances of student writing, especially when they are under duress. The English and Language Arts Performance Task must be eliminated this year. The best evaluators of a student’s writing during this time is his or her teachers.

Finally, they should NOT ask for an extension to give these tests later during fall, when we are all hopeful that we can return to full in-person learning in our classrooms where teachers who pivoted and trained on new technologies and methods will be able to accelerate the real return to learn for students. They do not need to return for any testing that does not give a teacher immediate feedback to improve performance. These can be screeners, school-based common assessments, or possibly some of the interim assessments.

We do not need students to return to school in quarter four to satisfy dubious federal or state testing requirements. They need to return to faces and laughter, stories and tears, and a structured schedule that helps return routine to their days. Thus, I request the following paragraph be amended as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, that the Department of Education is urged to request a federal **[Accountability and School Identification]** waiver **[and a waiver to eliminate the ELA performance task]** from standardized testing requirements for the 2020-2021 school year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of Education[,] ~~and~~ [Ms. Teri Ushijima, Ed. D., Director of the Assessment & Accountability Branch and] the Superintendent of Education.

Respectfully yours,  
Ms. Beatrice De Rego  
Kahuku High & Intermediate Test Coordinator



