



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

Date: 02/08/2021

Time: 03:00 PM

Location: 229

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

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

Title of Bill: SB 0365 RELATING TO STUDENT INFORMED CONSENT.

Purpose of Bill: Allows public school students in grades kindergarten through 12 to decline participation in dissection, vivisection, and other procedures harmful to animals. Requires schools to make alternative educational projects available, and the board of education to develop rules and give notice to all schools.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully supports the intent of SB 365 regarding student-informed consent and educational alternatives to dissection and vivisection of animals and offers the following comments.

The Department recognizes the importance of student voice and encourages students to express their points of view as a normal part of the learning process (see Board Policy 101-13, Controversial Issues:

<https://boe.hawaii.gov/policies/Board%20Policies/Controversial%20Issues.pdf>). Students are provided the opportunity to choose to not participate in learning activities that may be considered controversial through an opt-out process. This process includes parent/guardian notification of the potentially controversial learning activity, options for parents/guardians to exclude the student from such activities, and guidance on alternative learning opportunities for students. Information on the opt-out process is provided to families via the Controversial Issues webpage:

<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/FAQ/Pages/Parent-opt-out-for-child.aspx>. An annual memorandum on this subject is distributed to all complex area superintendents, principals, and teachers via the Opening of the School Year Packet.

Existing Board policies and Department regulations afford school choice regarding the use of dissection as a pedagogical approach to studying organisms, structures, and processes in life science. The primary professional organizations for teachers of science (National Science

Teachers Association) and biology (National Association of Biology Teachers) support the choice of teachers and schools in using safe, responsible dissection as a method for teaching and learning about structures and processes of organisms. Both organizations do, however, encourage teachers to provide alternative activities to students who object to dissection. These organizations call attention to the possible limitations of these types of alternate activities in achieving the same learning objectives as dissection.

The Department respectfully submits that the opt-out process currently in place for Board Policy 101-13, Controversial Issues, addresses the issue highlighted in this measure.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 365.

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.

SB-365

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 3:01:14 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT

Students should be able to decline. There should be alternatives provided for them.