

Date of Hearing: February 9, 2008

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: H.B. No. 493, Relating to Education

Purpose: Allows home school students to participate on an equal basis in any extracurricular activities offered by a public school. Requires home school students to pay applicable activity participation fees.

Department's Position: At this time, the Department of Education (Department) chooses not to comment on this Bill until the Board of Education (Board) has taken an opportunity to review the Bill. The Board, at the February 19, 2009, General Business Meeting, will be taking a position on this Bill.

HB 493
2:00 pm
Monday February 9, 2009

My name is Miriam Goldberg and I am a Masters in Social Work student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am here to testify on behalf of HB 493 that home school students should be allowed to participate on an equal basis in extracurricular actives offered by a public school.

Before moving to Oahu I lived on Kauai and worked for Hale Kipa; a program supporting families and youth. While working for Hale Kipa one family sticks out. This family consisted of a mom, a ten year old son, and a sixteen year old daughter. The mom home schooled her two children. Where the family loved and respected one another, there was little to no socialization with peers or the community. The boy lacked the desire to play with other boys his own age or to even go explore (as typical for ten year old boys), without the aide of his mother. The sixteen year old girl spent much of her time alone or with her mother and brother.

Whether your child is the most social of children or he prefers staying to himself, kids need outlets. With both the allowance and acceptance for home schooled children to equally participate in after school programs, children that do not interact with other children throughout the day can be more active within their community. Children will have the opportunity to be more hands on with their peers, resulting in a heightened sense of self and community awareness. Kids can develop appropriate social skills and even new interests. Sports are not only a positive way for children to interact with one another, but they are also a positive way for children to gain exercise while learning team building skills and cooperation.

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2009
Monday, February 9, 2009
2:00 p.m.

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO. 493 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

TO THE HONORABLE ROY M. TAKUMI, CHAIR, AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

My name is Drake Boyer and I am a homeschooled student in my freshman year. I am testifying in support of House Bill 493, which would allow homeschooled students to participate in extracurricular activities such as sports, cheerleading, music, etc. My support of this bill would come with one amendment.

The problem with current law in Hawaii is that homeschooled students are not able to fully pursue their goals at a high school level. Six-time Pro Bowler Jason Taylor was able to compete with his local high school football team in Pennsylvania even though he was homeschooled in his 10th, 11th and 12th grade years. More recently, Tim Tebow of the Florida Gators football team and winner of the 2007 Heisman Trophy, the most prestigious award in college football, was homeschooled his entire life! Just nine years before his freshman year of high school, the state of Florida passed a law to allow homeschooled students to participate in extracurricular activities at their local schools. It took only nine years to produce a Heisman Trophy winner. Imagine what talent Hawaii may be losing out on!

However, I believe this bill has one flaw. Part (g) on page 3 beginning with line 18 states that a school may charge up to 150% of the extracurricular activity participation fee amount it would charge an enrolled student. The reason this is a flaw is because parents who homeschool pay taxes too. Why should these parents have to pay more than an enrolled student's parents?

I, too, have been affected by the current law preventing homeschoolers from participating in extracurricular activities. My teammates and I on the Kuikahi Volleyball Club recently returned from a tournament in Anaheim where we earned an open bid to the Junior Olympics in Atlanta in July. However, while my teammates and other players get to improve their skills during the current high school season, I am left to sit in the stands and think, what if...

I thank this committee for the opportunity to present testimony on this matter and ask that this bill be passed with my suggested amendment.

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

Regular Session of 2009

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2009

2:00 PM

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NUMBER 493 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

TO THE HONORABLE NORMAN SAKAMOTO, CHAIR, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Lanson Ho'opai, and I am a 14 year old resident of Honolulu in my freshman year. I very strongly support this bill, which would allow homeschoolers to participate in extracurricular activities in Public School and Private School Campus'.

This bill states its motive as follows: "The purpose of this act is to allow home school students who would otherwise be denied the opportunity to do so, to participate on an equal basis in extracurricular activities."

The passing of this bill would grant the homeschooled student the opportunity to participate in activities such as sports, A+, and other activities which would be restricted from him/her as a result of the separation between homeschooling and regular schooling, by which I mean Public and Private Schooling. Furthermore, the prospect for increased physical and mental activity for the homeschooled student would be made available.

The Homeschooled student has similar standards required of him/her in order for him/her to home school legally, i.e. take a Standardized Test and send a report notifying the district school of yearly progress.

The activities which HB Number 493 mentions are not entirely funded by the government. Taxpayer dollars, including those of homeschooling parents, are used to fund and support these activities. There are no exemptions to taxpayer's dollars, saying that this family's money or that family's money will go to, shall we say, classroom expenses and not sport expenses. So the question becomes: Why are we required to fund activities that we cannot participate in? In my view, this is equal access discrimination. It seems inconsistent to be supporting activities that we do not and cannot take part in.

I thank this committee for the opportunity to present my opinion and testimony on this matter, and know that with the passage of this bill comes better education for homeschooled students physically, mentally, and financially.

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

Regular Session of 2009

Monday, February 9, 2009
2:00 p.m. in HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 309

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NUMBER 493, RELATING TO EDUCATION

TO THE HONORABLE ROY M. TAKUMI, CHAIR, AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

My name is Chelsea Tyson, and I am a 14 year-old home schooled student. I support this bill but I feel that an amendment should be made. I believe passing this bill will open up many opportunities for both home school students and the private schools and public schools offering extracurricular activities.

By allowing home school students to participate in extracurricular activities offered by public schools and private schools (at the private school's discretion) this will allow home school students to interact with other children their age, and be able to pursue their dreams. It would also have a big impact on high school students that are home schooled because, by participating with a school in sports, club, dance, etc. they will be able to be exposed to college scouts and possibly gain a scholarship. This bill would also help schools because for many sports or competitions, there are requirements for the number of members in that activity. If a school is unable to meet that requirement, the school won't be able to have a team or be able to participate. However, if this bill is passed, home school students could help fill up those empty spots and may be an extreme benefit to the team, because there are many talented children in public schools, private schools, and those who are in home school. In an article from USA Today, it lists some examples of home school students who excelled in sports. A couple of them would be, 2004 Olympian swimmer, Katie Hoff, and basketball player, Mike Beasley who went directly from home schooling to the NBA. As you can see from these facts, by hosting home school students, public schools just may have a rising professional athlete or famous dancer, and by being able to participate in extracurricular activities in regular schools, home school students will have a way to pursue and follow their passion in a sport, club, dance, etc. and it also gives home school students many great opportunities.

Though I believe this bill should be passed, I also think that an amendment should be made in the financial area in the bill. In Section 2, letter "g," it states that public schools may charge a home school student for participation and that it can be up to 150 percent of the fee charged to an enrolled student. I do feel that a fee would be fair for the public school system, but I believe that it should not exceed the fee charged to the students that are enrolled in the school.

Overall, I support this bill and strongly believe it should be passed, with the amendment to the means of finance. By doing this, *all* students of Hawaii, whether home schooled or not, will be able to excel in not only academics but in other activities as well.

I thank the committee for taking the time to read my testimony on this issue.

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

Regular Session of 2009

MONDAY, February 9, 2009

2:00 p.m.

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NUMBER 493, RELATING TO EDUCATION

TO THE HONORABLE ROY M. TAKUMI, CHAIR, AND MEMBERS OF THE
COMMITTEE

My name is Ryan McDonald and I am a 14-year-old home-educated student, and resident of Honolulu. I support this bill with some reservations. I believe that after addressing the wording of some areas of the bill, HB 493 should progress through your committee.

I compete in sailing races and competitions around the island, and having the opportunity to join a local sailing team would provide a greater chance for me to expand my knowledge and skill. Not only could I improve my overall ability, I would have more chances to race! This would provide me with incredible new ways to use my God-given talent, and would allow other students from around Hawaii to do the same.

Lines 7-11 of HB 493 state, "Home school students who participate in an extracurricular activity in a public school shall be included in the pupil enrollment of the public school where the student participates." This language of the bill causes concern and is the source of my reservation. Specifically, if I were to participate in a public school extracurricular activity, then I would be added to the list of "pupils" that the school oversees. Even though I am not a student at their school, would this cause them to have any sort of power as a supervisor over my education?

Testimony of Ryan McDonald
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If the public school system were to obtain a sort of authority or oversight towards the homeschool students involved with their extracurricular activities, this could be used to intrude on their ability to be home educated. Homeschoolers have fought long and hard for our right to be taught at home, and I would not want to blindly throw my support behind something that could interfere with that right.

Under section 2, subsection G, the school I participate with would be allowed to charge me up to 150% of normal price of admission. These programs are funded by everyone's tax dollars; there should be no price difference for a homeschool student. Since I help pay for it, I should be able to use it! I would greatly appreciate having an opportunity to be on their team, but only at a fair price.

Aside from these two phrases in the bill, I see the enormous impact it could have on Hawaii, and the new freedoms that homeschool students would obtain. We would have more options in the community, and that is something necessary for a good education.

In conclusion, the homeschool community would greatly benefit from a bill with intentions such as these. I thank the committee for taking time to read my testimony on HB 493 and urge you to address areas of concern, and allow it to pass.