

House of Representatives

Committee on Education

Roy Takumi, Chair

Monday, February 7, 2011; 2:00 p.m.

Capitol Conf. Room 309

Testimony

SB 8, SD 1

Chairman Takumi, and members of the Committee on Education.

My name is Jim Williams and I am testifying in full support of SB 8, SD 1. I note with dismay that this committee already has passed HB 338, with amendments (although the amendments have not been posted as this testimony is written). I urge you to pass SB 8, in order to expedite consideration by the House.

Senate Bill 8 provides for implementation of an appointed Board of Education **without** nomination by a board of education selection advisory council, but with direct appointment by the Governor and confirmation by the Senate.

During the period preceding the election, there was considerable effort by various groups to support the Constitutional amendment that passed overwhelmingly. The key theme of the support for the amendment was to make the Governor ultimately accountable for improvements in our education system. Diluting the Governor's appointing power will also dilute accountability. SB 8 implements the Constitutional amendment in a way consistent with the communications that resulted in its approval. The selection advisory council provided for in HB 338 is unnecessary and contrary to the public desire to have more accountability for the progress of our public education system.

The result of the election is that we have a "lame duck" board of education. To get on with the business of improving our public schools, it is imperative that this Legislature act quickly to give the Governor the authority to appoint the BOE. The best way to move forward is to move SB 8 forward, rather than putting forth a competing proposal that will delay final enactment possibly to the end of the session in May.

I urge you to respond to the current consensus among education, labor and business groups and join with the Senate in passing a straightforward measure providing for appointment of the Board of Education by the Governor with confirmation by the Senate. The best way to do this is to give quick approval to SB 8.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 8 SD 1.

Jim Williams  
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Testimony of  
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To the House Committee on Education  
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Representative Roy M. Takumi, Chair  
Representative Della Au Belatti, Vice-Chair

SB8 SD1

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Belatti and members of the Committee:

The Board of the Directors of the League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports SB8 SD1 as written. We respectfully submit the following as input for you to consider in your decision-making process concerning implementing the enabling legislation that defines the selection procedure for Board of Education members.

All of the rhetoric prior to the general election vote that opted to change the method for choosing the members of the Board of Education centered on the issue of 'accountability' and the idea that if 'everyone is accountable then no-one is accountable.' Thus, the voters opted for 'accountability' when they chose to have the governor nominate Board of Education members. We are pleased that the Senate has taken a stand that the public supports to create a governance structure outlined in SB8 SD1, and we urge you to approve this bill.

The League feels that the only acceptable route to accountability will be for the governor to make the nominations with the advice and consent of the senate, through confirmation of the nominees.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Valere McFarland, Ph.D.  
Education Chair  
League of Women Voters-Hawaii