



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

Date: 03/24/2022

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 Via Videoconference

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Interim Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: HCR 0138 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CREATE A STUDENT-LED WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS THE NEED FOR ACTIVE INCLUSION OF DIVERSE IDENTITIES WITHIN AND BEYOND SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION, TO TEACH CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE IDEAS AROUND MUTUAL RESPECT IN RELATIONSHIPS, AND TO FIND SITES OF POTENTIAL ACTIVE INCLUSION OF THESE IDENTITIES IN SEXUAL HEALTH CURRICULA, ALL WITHIN THE FRAMING PRINCIPLES OF ALOHA KEKAHI I KEKAHI.

Department's Position:

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) respectfully offers comments on HCR 138. This resolution strives to create and maintain safe, affirming, and inclusive learning environments where students can be successful and mature into their full potential. In line with this intent, the Department remains committed to implementing culturally relevant and inclusive practices to support students' total well-being and sense of belonging. The Department respectfully recommends that this measure is not needed at this time as it has several efforts moving forward to address this issue.

Recognizing the importance of validating students' gender identity, guidance for supporting transgender students was developed. The guidance aligns to Hawai'i State Board of Education (Board) Policy 305-10 Anti-Harassment, Anti-Bullying, and Anti-Discrimination Against Student(s) by Employees, prohibiting discrimination and harassment against students on the basis of gender identity and gender expression, and Board Policy E-3 Na Hopena A'o, encouraging the Department to work together as a system that includes everyone in the broader community to develop competencies that strengthen a sense of belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, total well-being, and Hawai'i.

Schools may have student-led clubs where students share information and resources and support peers and positive school environments. Some schools have a GSA (gay-straight alliance or gender-sexuality alliance), which is a student-led club that aims to create a safe, welcoming, and accepting school environment for all youth, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Instruction on LGBTQ+ topics may be addressed in various content areas where appropriate as guided by their Board-approved standards and school design. State standards, such as those in social studies, examine movements that emerged in the late civil rights era. Lessons for this content area standard may include the study of the Stonewall Riots, which provides opportunities for students to delve into the history and past struggles members of the LGBTQ+ community faced.

Sexual health is one of the topics addressed in standards-based Health Education. The Department implements Board Policy 103-5, Sexual Health Education, which includes developmentally appropriate and medically accurate instruction that:

- Helps students develop relationships and communication skills to form healthy relationships that are based on mutual respect and affection and are free from violence, coercion, and intimidation;
- Helps students develop skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and stress management to make healthy decisions about sexuality and relationships;
- Encourages students to communicate with their parents, guardians, and/or other trusted adults about sexuality; and
- Informs students of available community resources.

Additionally, the Department vetted instructional materials for sexual health education and sexual violence prevention education in collaboration with a work group, which included participants from the Department's tri-level system and other state agencies and programs (i.e., Hawai'i State Department of Health, Hawai'i Keiki Program). Participants of the work group included teacher (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school, special education), counselor, academic coach, district/complex area resource teacher, and LGBTQ+ representatives. Nurses from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa's Hawai'i Keiki Program reviewed the sexual health education instructional materials for medical accuracy. Information about sexual health education, the parent/legal guardian opt-out process, and the list of vetted instructional materials for sexual health education and sexual violence prevention education, is available on the Department's public webpage (<https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/HealthAndNutrition/sexed>).

The Department is a member of the Hawai'i State Department of Health's Sexual and Gender Minority Working Group and remains committed to this ongoing collaborative partnership to address health-related issues for sexual and gender minority students.

The Department will continue to utilize school-based surveillance, such as the Youth

Risk Behavior Survey and School Health Profiles Survey, to gather data from secondary students, health education teachers, and principals. Local and national publications, including the Hawai'i Sexual and Gender Minority Health Report, will continue to inform policies and programming and provide guidance for evidence-based and evidence-informed practices that support the academic, behavioral, social, emotional, and mental health needs of our diverse student populations.

It is worth noting that the Department's ongoing work and commitment to supporting students' health, well-being, and safety currently address the issue highlighted by this measure. Due to the ongoing efforts, the Department respectfully recommends that this measure is not needed at this time.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



To: Representative Woodson, Chair
Representative Kapela, Vice Chair
House Committee on Education

Re: HR 138/ HCR 138, Requesting The Department Of Education To Create A Student-Led Working Group To Address The Need For Active Inclusion Of Diverse Identities Within And Beyond Sexual Health Education, To Teach Culturally Responsive Ideas Around Mutual Respect In Relationships, And To Find Sites Of Potential Active Inclusion Of These Identities In Sexual Health Curricula, All Within The Framing Principles Of Aloha Kekahi I Kekahi.
2:00 PM, March 24, 2022

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and committee members,

On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to **provide testimony in support of HR 138/ HCR 138**, Requesting The Department Of Education To Create A Student-Led Working Group To Address The Need For Active Inclusion Of Diverse Identities Within And Beyond Sexual Health Education, To Teach Culturally Responsive Ideas Around Mutual Respect In Relationships, And To Find Sites Of Potential Active Inclusion Of These Identities In Sexual Health Curricula, All Within The Framing Principles Of Aloha Kekahi I Kekahi.

At the 2021 Hawaii Children and Youth Summit,¹ the participating youth from across the state proposed and chose comprehensive sexual health training for educators and other educational officers as their top priority for legislative action. The youth expressed concern that when LGBTQ youth are not mentioned or stigmatized in sexual health education at school, which can lead to higher risks and poorer health and academic outcomes for them.

The Centers for Disease Control lists six characteristics of quality sexual health education programs, which include: "Are taught by well-qualified and highly-trained school staff... [and] Address the health needs of all students, including the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth."² The CDC also points out that students who participate in well-designed sexual health education are more likely to delay sex, increase their safe sex practices, and improve their academic performance. The proposed working group will help deliver quality sexual health education programs, and in turn help improve the health and academic outcomes of our LGBTQ youth. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony

Thank you,

Kathleen Algire
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

¹ <https://www.hawaiicys.org/>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/whatworks/what-works-sexual-health-education.htm>

HCR-138

Submitted on: 3/23/2022 11:51:12 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Fay Weldon | Individual | Support | Remotely Via Zoom |

Comments:

Education is such an important thing. When we shield our children from the ever-changing world it shields them from becoming an upstanding citizens. Don't you think that our next upcoming generation should be able to be safe and make rational educated decisions with the knowledge that if it goes wrong there is someone there to help?

Nobody should have felt the anxiety, scrutiny, and shame of peers looking down upon them because they have a different sexual preference that was never taught about Each and every student across the state should be given the same information no matter their gender, sexuality, skin color or economic standing in society.

Not giving someone a leg up on potentially making their life better is being biased.

Giving individuals a chance to understand another somebody that may seem “different” than themselves, giving our society to open that door of acceptance with the ability to make our community safer and closer. We can change history whenever the only thing stopping us is trying to change it.

Our students should be safe from judgment.

Our students should be taught that NO means NO

What if they get sexually harassed that it is wrong and its not because of something they did

Students should be able to feel safe enough to express themselves

getting the validation of people you see every day should be a must

the Oxford English Dictionary traces it back to 1375, where it appears in the medieval romance William and the Werewolf. Except for the old-style language of that poem, its use of singular they to refer to an unnamed person seems very modern.

Nobody should ever say that they/them is not a singular pronoun and is not correct in English.