



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

**Date:** 03/21/2022

**Time:** 03:15 PM

**Location:** CR 229 & Videoconference

**Committee:** Senate Education

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Resolution:** SCR 0226 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT A CIVIL RIGHTS CURRICULUM PLAN FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully provides comments on SCR 0226.

The Hawaii Core Standards in Social Studies, adopted by the Hawaii State Board of Education in 2018, provides for robust teaching and learning about the civil rights movement's people, events, and legacy in all K-12 public schools.

The Hawaii Core Standards in Social Studies utilize both a thematic and a chronological approach. Lower elementary standards are broadly thematic, setting age-appropriate conceptual foundations such as change, continuity, and context through multiple perspectives for studying history. These foundations allow for a more complex and robust study of the people, places, and events in Civil Rights history (and its historical antecedents) in later grades. People like Jackie Robinson, Rosa Parks, Ruby Bridges, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and others within this context are introduced to younger elementary students. Older elementary children explain the system and impact of the transatlantic slave trade and draw conclusions about the lives of enslaved people in the American colonies.

Middle school students grapple with how slavery shaped the economic development of both the North and the South, how enslaved people endured and resisted slavery, and how conflicts over slavery led the North and South to war. They also examine critical topics of this era that include (but are not limited to) Reconstruction and the rise of Jim

Crow, Black Codes, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (the landmark Supreme Court case affirming the "separate but equal" doctrine), and the Reconstruction amendments.

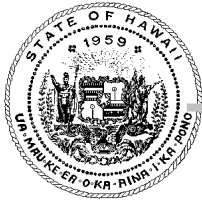
Further study requires students to evaluate the effectiveness of civil rights organizations and actions in overcoming racial segregation, including (but not limited to) the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, founded by Dr. King, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Students also learn more deeply about individuals such as Rosa Parks and Dr. King, events and actions such as the Montgomery bus boycott, sit-ins, freedom rides, and policy changes such as the desegregation of the Armed Forces, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Department provides materials to schools to help teachers implement lessons and units about the Civil Rights movement. PBS and Learning for Justice are but two sites linked to the Social Studies page of the Learning Design Resource, available to all schools. Additional resources are made available to all schools through the annual African American Month memo sent to all schools.

Thus, while doing more for the study of Civil Rights is important and necessary, because the Department already has these topics in place, the Department feels that this resolution is not needed at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SCR 0226.



# HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

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Monday, March 21, 2022, 3:15 p.m.  
Via Videoconference, and Conference Rm 229

To: The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Education

From: Liann Ebesugawa, Chair  
and Commissioners of the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission

Re: S.R. 219/S.C.R. 226

The Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) has enforcement jurisdiction over Hawai‘i’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai‘i constitutional mandate that no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights. Art. I, Sec. 5.

The HCRC supports and S.R. 219 and S.C.R. 226, requesting the Department of Education to implement a Civil Rights Curriculum for Public School Students. As the agency enforcing Hawai‘i state civil rights laws, we appreciate the importance of civil rights history and the civil rights movement – but for the civil rights movement, nationally and in Hawai‘i, we would not have civil rights laws to enforce.

The Civil Rights Movement is an important part of American history. But it is not something that happened long ago and far away. Here in Hawai‘i, we have a proud civil rights history, a history of our own Civil Rights Movement that was driven by our labor movement and

its struggles against racism and for better lives for workers, a movement that paralleled the Civil Rights Movement that changed the American South and the nation in the 1950s and 1960s.

The HCRC supports development of a civil rights curriculum, but suggests that it should not start and end with teaching the lessons of the struggles against Jim Crow-era laws and the importance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s leadership, but should be expanded to include other stories, rewriting civil rights history to include Hawai'i stories, and including Hawai'i voices in the discussion and development of a meaningful curriculum that doesn't end in the 1960's. And, even more important, this civil rights curriculum should be designed and used to share the history of the civil rights movement not just for DOE public school students, but for everyone in the State of Hawai'i.

**The HCRC supports S.R. 219 and S.C.R. 226, and suggests that the scope of the resolution be expanded to call for development of a civil rights curriculum that includes Hawai'i voices, Hawai'i stories, and our own civil rights history.**