



HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 411 HONOLULU, HI 96813 · PHONE: 586-8636 FAX: 586-8655 TDD: 568-8692

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.

SR-219

Submitted on: 3/21/2022 2:08:02 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/21/2022 3:15:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
C. Vierra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Educating our children on Civil Rights has never been more important in my lifetime. I definitely support its curriculum implementation in schools. After 2 years of blatant civil rights violations many of us have experienced at the hands of our government with covid restrictions and mandates, the discussions should be interesting. Hopefully we will never repeat these atrocities again.