



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/31/2026  
**Time:** 02:00 PM  
**Location:** 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
**Committee:** EDN

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** HCR42, URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO MEET THE CRITERIA NECESSARY TO OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZE CHEERLEADING AS A TITLE IX SPORT IN HAWAII.

**Purpose of Bill:** Urging The Department Of Education To Meet The Criteria Necessary To Officially Recognize Cheerleading As A Title Ix Sport In Hawaii.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HCR 42, which urges the Department to meet the criteria necessary to officially recognize cheerleading as a Title IX sport in Hawaii.

The Department is deeply committed to Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) and the tenets it upholds. The Department also understands the importance of gender equity in our interscholastic athletic programs and recognizes the abilities and efforts of all interscholastic student athletes.

The Department currently offers 21 interscholastic sports statewide. Although not all high school competitive athletic programs offer all 21 interscholastic sports, the vast majority of the Department's high schools have cheer teams: (1) Sideline Cheer; and/or (2) Competitive Cheer. It is important to note that the purpose of Sideline Cheer and Competitive Cheer differs. Sideline Cheer primarily provides support to other interscholastic teams during their competitive events. The main focus of Competitive Cheer teams, however, is participation in cheer competitions at both the league and state levels.

Although Competitive Cheer has been offered to student athletes since 1999, Competitive Cheer athletes have not been counted as "student-athletes" for purposes of Title IX as defined by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education. Proactive measures and actions have been taken to meet the criteria of a sport as defined by OCR. This includes aligning competitive cheer with other established varsity sports, primarily by adding more competition opportunities.

During the 2024-2025 school year, there were 504 Competitive Cheer athletes. Both

Sideline Cheer and Competitive Cheer teams are co-ed sports; however, the majority of cheer athletes in sideline and competitive cheer are female. The Department believes that moving forward to recognize Competitive Cheer as an "official" sport for purposes of Title IX would help increase female student-athlete participation totals.

The Department notes that future funding to support this endeavor may be requested; however, the Department will make its best effort to look within itself first.

For these reasons, the Department supports HCR 42 and appreciates the Legislature's continued commitment to equity and inclusion in Hawaii's public education system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HCR 42.



March 30, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT** of **HCR42/HR38**, URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO MEET THE CRITERIA NECESSARY TO OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZE CHEERLEADING AS A TITLE IX SPORT IN HAWAII.

**To:** Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair  
Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Education

**From:** Llasmin Chaîne, LSW, Executive Director, Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

**Re:** Testimony in SUPPORT of HCR42/HR38, URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO MEET THE CRITERIA NECESSARY TO OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZE CHEERLEADING AS A TITLE IX SPORT IN HAWAII.

Hearing: Tuesday, March 31, 2026, 2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 309, State Capitol

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women **supports HCR42/HR38**, which addresses the recognition of competitive cheerleading in relation to Title IX.

As a statewide feminist government body, our mission is to advance equality and equity for women and girls in Hawaii through advocacy, education, and policy development. This resolution is significant to our work because **equitable access to athletic opportunities is a core component of gender equity**, and Title IX remains a critical tool in ensuring that women and girls receive fair treatment in educational settings, including sports.

Recognizing competitive cheerleading as an athletic opportunity under Title IX can help address disparities in sports participation and representation for female students. Such recognition aligns with best practices in promoting equality, inclusion and the visibility of female athletes, empowering individuals, supporting their achievements, and fostering leadership. It also advances the broader goal of ensuring that state programs and policies reflect the experiences and needs of women and girls. Ongoing evaluation and stakeholder engagement will help ensure that efforts to expand athletic opportunities truly enhance equity and do not unintentionally create new barriers.

We respectfully urge this Committee to **pass HCR42/HR38**, expanding athletic opportunities and gender equity efforts.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.