



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

**Date:** 04/20/2026

**Time:** 01:01 PM

**Location:** CR 225 & Videoconference

**Committee:** EDU

**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 Hawai'i.

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 for sideline and competitive cheer are female. The Department believes that moving forward to recognize Competitive Cheer as an “official” sport for Title IX purposes would help increase female student-athlete participation.

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.



April 19, 2026

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

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

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

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

Hearing: Monday, April 20, 2026, 1:01 p.m.  
Conference Room 229, State Capitol

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women **supports HCR42**, relating to competitive cheerleading and Title IX. As a statewide feminist government body dedicated to advancing equality for women and girls, we recognize the importance of ensuring that all athletic opportunities, including emerging sports like competitive cheerleading, are equitably accessible and recognized under Title IX protections.

This resolution is significant to our mission because it **addresses the ongoing need for gender equity in school athletics**, a domain where disparities have historically limited opportunities for female students. By explicitly recognizing competitive cheerleading within the scope of Title IX, the measure **affirms the value of female athletes** and supports the visibility and viability of their contributions in Hawaii's educational and athletic communities.

Aligning competitive cheerleading with Title IX requirements advances our policy objectives of inclusion, equity, opportunity, and increased viability and visibility of female leaders. Such recognition can **help ensure that resources, facilities, and support are allocated fairly**, and that female athletes receive the same protections and opportunities as their peers in other sports. This approach is consistent with best practices in promoting gender equity in educational settings.

We respectfully recommend that implementation of this measure include ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the intended equity outcomes are achieved. Additionally, we encourage collaboration with stakeholders, including female athletes, coaches, and gender equity advocates, to address any barriers to full participation and recognition. This will help maximize the positive impact of the resolution and further the progress toward gender equity in Hawaii's schools.

We respectfully urge this Committee to **pass HCR42**. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.