



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: HCR47, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FOUNDATIONS IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS TO OFFER SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID TO GRADUATES AND PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE SCHOOLS.

Purpose of Bill: Requesting The Department Of Education To Support The Establishment Of Foundations In Public High Schools To Offer Scholarships And Financial Aid To Graduates And Provide Financial Support To The Schools.

Department's Position:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HCR47/HR43. The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the intent to increase philanthropic support and financial aid for our public high school graduates. However, the Department has concerns regarding the operational details and structural requirements proposed in this resolution.

While the Department supports the goal of increasing financial resources for students, we must highlight several practical and policy-driven challenges:

- Department Standard Practice (SP) 1916 establishes that organizations such as booster clubs, Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), and foundations are considered independent entities separate from the Department. They are not audited by the Department's Internal Audit Office. Because these groups are independent, the Department does not have the authority to oversee their internal controls or financial disbursements. Furthermore, the Department does not possess the legal or accounting expertise required to provide technical assistance for the creation or management of private nonprofit entities.
- Additionally, community capacity varies across the islands. Not every school community has the volunteer base necessary to successfully sustain a foundation.

For communities that have an interest in providing resources to their schools and graduates but may not have the capacity or will to navigate the administrative and fiduciary pathways of forming a foundation. The Department recommends leveraging existing professional organizations that already have robust programs and structures for accepting financial donations and administering scholarships. These organizations provide a viable option for community groups who wish to support a school but do not have the capacity to perform the administrative and financial functions of managing independent scholarship funds. This approach ensures that donations reach students quickly and efficiently without creating unsustainable local overhead.

The Department remains committed to fostering community partnerships. We believe that leveraging existing experts and refining our internal processes—rather than establishing a new mandate for individual school foundations—is the most effective way to ensure sustainable financial support for Hawaii’s graduates.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

I support HCR47.

My name is Allen Awaya. I am a former committee clerk for the Senate Committee on Education under Senators Sakamoto and Tokuda. In the 2012 legislative session, I wrote SCR77 asking the DOE to encourage all public high schools in the state to develop endowment funds to support students who would like to pursue post graduate education. That SCR passed and at the same time, I personally pledged \$5000 to the principal of Kalani High School as the first contribution to such a fund once it became established.

In 2024 that \$5000 continued to sit in my savings accounts and I finally realized nothing was going to happen if I didn't act myself. So I talked a fellow Kalani grad into starting the effort. I imagined that I'd be able to raise \$100K with contributions from just my own 1966 graduating class.

Well, we're now into 2026 and the only funds we've raised are the \$5000 I pledged in 2012 and another \$5000 that my friend also anted up. Why? Plainly, it's just not easy. There are so many legal and formal steps that need careful planning and implementation. We have simply been learning each step the hard way, by doing our own research, asking people more knowledgeable and experienced, and trying to recruit like-minded people with skills that meet the need areas that are absolutely essential to fitting all the moving parts that are required. It's like a rubrik's cube. Without all the pieces in the right places, you can't solve the puzzle. For us, we can't start soliciting funds.

What HCR47 requests is a resource that those in other schools who want to do the same thing won't need to go through such growing pains that we've experienced. If someone compiled a Foundations for Dummies handbook, that would be helpful. If there was someone we could have approached each time we had questions or hit a stumbling block, that would be helpful. If there was a resource office that had a list of experts in legal matters, technology, accounting, investments, fundraising, event planning, etc that would be helpful.

Can you imagine what a boost it would be for graduating seniors of any public school to have the kind of financial support available to them like Farrington or McKinley have provided for decades? It is an embarrassment and a shame that maybe 90% of our public school graduates do not have that kind of support. There are many others like me who will maybe grudgingly take up the reins and make the effort but I can assure you that the task is daunting and discouraging. I hope this concurrent resolution leads to the supportive resources so that the task is not as daunting or discouraging and maybe 100% of our public school seniors will graduate from schools that have foundations that support continuing their education.

Mahalo,
Allen Awaya
'66 Kalani graduate

Retired public school teacher
Former UH asst prof

HR-43

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 10:02:33 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ray Soon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HCR 47. Briefly, this is a very cost effective way for the State to enable the post high school education of Hawaii's public school graduates. There are thousands of public school graduates who would willingly contribute to Foundations associated with their high schools where graduates can turn to for assistance with their secondary education. Enable it. There is certainly a need. This is especially the case with graduates who are not your typical "scholarship" students: students who want to pursue community college degrees, or students who are interested in trades or crafts, or students for whom a four year college education is unnecessary. Public School foundations can support all of this if crafted correctly. HCR 47 is a first step. Please support this effort.