

Senate Commerce Consumer Protection and Health Committee
Tuesday, February 2, 2016
8:30 a.m., in room 229
Hawai'i State Capitol.

LATE

Honorable Chair Senator Rosalyn Baker, Honorable Vice Chair Senator Michelle Kidani
Honorable Members of the Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health Committee

My name is Stan Michaels, I am 75 years old, and I am testifying as a private citizen

I am in strong support of SB 2334.

Both Senator Baker and Senator Kidani are signators to this bill so I will not speak to all of the data and facts that make this bill vital to our schoolchildren. Instead, I would like to jump back 63 years to when I was 12 years old, and thanks to a vision testing program in my new school I discovered I had been blind my entire life. From age 5 to 12 I attended a school that did not offer any vision examinations or check-ups of any kind. I was considered an unruly child, and was constantly being berated by my teachers for talking to classmates during class. They did not ask why...they just gave me a D in deportment. Had they asked I could have told them I could not see the black board. I was asking fellow classmates what was on the board, so I could try and do my school work. From kindergarten to 6th grade I received D's in conduct and deportment. I was ashamed about glasses because I heard other classmates talking about being 4-eyed. Kids are cruel some times and when I heard that comment I shut my mouth cause I didn't want to wear glasses and be called 4-EYED.

It wasn't until my parents transferred me to a new school district that just happened to have an eye test administered by the school nurse. Yup...on my very first day of 7th grade I was called into the nurse's office because I was new student to that school...and given an eye exam. Just the basic eye chart...which I could not see the top line. The nurse was stunned and called my mother at her work place. My mom was also stunned. She rushed to school. I was kept in the office. She asked me why I didn't tell her...and I told her I didn't want to be called 4 EYED. On that very day, because we did not have a car, we took two busses, and a streetcar to get to my grandmothers eye doctor...and he was also stunned. My vision was 20/800. I was Legally blind. He taped together a pair of glasses using the testing frames and lenses so I could have something while we waited for my first pair of glasses. On the way home in the bus and on the street car...I read every billboard, and every street sign. I had never seen them before. My mom cried all the way home. That night I saw the stars for the first time in my life and I was 12.

Talk about a child left out of educational opportunities. We discovered a lot over the next 4 weeks...I wasn't dumb...I could read pretty well...and most important I could now understand

(Turn over to page 2)