



**LATE**

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WRITTEN ONLY

**Testimony COMMENTING on SCR137**

**REQUESTING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO CONSIDER REQUIRING STUDENTS IN GRADES SIX, SEVEN, AND EIGHT TO TAKE COURSES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

SENATOR JILL N. TOKUDA, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date: April 4, 2017

Room Number: 211

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department defers to the Department of Education on possible fiscal  
2 implications if additional instructors are needed to provide health and physical education.

3 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports the intent of SCR137  
4 requesting the Board of Education (BOE) to consider requiring students in middle school grades  
5 to take courses in physical education (PE) and health education.

6 The Department supports the Department of Education (DOE) vision that students are  
7 “*educated, healthy, and joyful lifelong learners,*” and continues to fund district level PE and  
8 health education resource teachers to provide teacher training and technical assistance. Currently  
9 the BOE has policies (103-1 Health and Wellness and 105-1 Academic Program), and the  
10 Wellness Guidelines which cover requirements for PE and health education in schools for all  
11 grade levels. However, the BOE middle school policy (102-9 Middle Level Education  
12 Promotion Policy) omits PE and health education as required courses in grades 6, 7, and 8.  
13 When middle schools offer PE and health education courses as electives, many students miss the  
14 opportunity to gain important life skills.

15 Quality PE contributes to a child's daily accumulation of physical activity and this is  
16 especially important for children who are overweight or who lack access to these opportunities in  
17 their home or community environment. Currently, only 14.4% of Hawaii’s middle school

1 students have daily PE. By high school that rate goes down to 6.7% compared to the national  
2 average of 29.8%.<sup>1</sup> Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence boosts strength and  
3 endurance, helps build healthy bones and muscles, aids weight control, reduces anxiety and  
4 stress, increases self-esteem, and may improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels.<sup>2</sup> The  
5 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, issued by the U.S. Department of Health and  
6 Human Services, recommend that children and adolescents aged 6-17 years have 60 minutes or  
7 more of physical activity each day.

8 Health education during the middle school years is especially important to prevent the  
9 onset of risky behaviors. Health-risk behaviors such as early sexual initiation, violence, and  
10 physical inactivity are consistently linked to poor grades and test scores and lower educational  
11 attainment.<sup>3</sup> School-based health programs can have positive effects on educational outcomes,  
12 health-risk behaviors, and health outcomes. High quality health education would help students  
13 to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to make healthy decisions, become  
14 health literate, and promote the health of others.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

16 **Offered Amendments:** The DOH offers the following amendment for consideration on  
17 page 2, paragraph 6, from lines 27 to 30, “. . .the Board of Education is requested to consider  
18 revising its policy 102-9 requiring students in grades six, seven, and eight to take courses in  
19 physical education and health education; and . . .”

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<sup>1</sup> Hawaii Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2015, <http://hhdw.org/health-reports-data/data-source/yrbs-reports/>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008.]

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/health\\_and\\_academics/](https://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/health_and_academics/)

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**From:** [sfey@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:sfey@everyactioncustom.com) on behalf of [Shelley Fey](#)  
**To:** [WAM Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Strong Support for SCR 137/SR58  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 4, 2017 8:14:40 AM

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Dear Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

To: The Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: Strong Support of SCR 137/SR58

Hrg: April 4, 2017 at 9:45am at Conference Room 211

I strongly support SCR137/SR58 which requests the Board of Education to consider requiring students in grades six, seven, and eight to take courses in physical education and health education.

In Hawaii, both physical education and health courses are offered as an optional component in the middle school curriculum. Here in Hawaii and across the nation, we are experiencing rising childhood obesity rates and losing the fight against inactivity among our young adults. Having meaningful, high-quality health and physical education as a required component in students' school curriculum is one of the best strategies to reverse this trend and increase the chances that young people will live healthier and more productive lives both in and out of the classroom.

Physical activity programs today go beyond the traditional 'gym' classes or 'free play' and focuses much more on exercise and fitness and the health benefits gained from regularly engaging in physical activity. Health education on the other hand teaches about physical, mental, emotional and social health. It motivates students to improve and maintain their health, prevent disease, and reduce risky behaviors.

The habits that an individual develops in childhood are fundamental to leading a healthy life. Physical education and health education programs, while sometimes overlooked and lose funding during times of economic difficulty, actually play a huge role to life and school success for students of all ages. We all need for such programs to remain a priority in our public schools.

I strongly support SCR137/SR58 and ask you to pass this out of committee.

Sincerely,  
Shelley Fey  
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