

Date: 03/17/2010

Committee: Senate Education and Housing

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Interim Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SCR 110 Requesting the Establishment of a Working Group to Develop a Comprehensive Plan to Improve Awareness of and Strengthen Support for Persons with Dyslexia

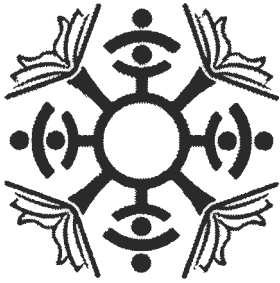
Purpose of Bill: Requests the establishment of a working group to develop a comprehensive plan to improve awareness of and strengthen support for persons with dyslexia.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) does not support this resolution for the following reasons. It is not the role of a teacher to diagnose a disability. We don't recognize "dyslexia" as a separate eligibility category for special education. We use the educational implications as a basis for eligibility and interventions.

Currently, the Department, as part of the Comprehensive Student Support System (CSSS), already has procedures in place to identify and address student needs using research based strategies and interventions. In addition, the Department is currently preparing to implement the Response to Intervention (RTI) system in 2010-2011.

The U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), has determined that the State of Hawaii has been in compliance regarding eligibility of services for children with specific learning disabilities.

For the aforementioned reasons the Department does not support this resolution as written.



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Before the Senate Committee on Education and Housing

DATE: Wednesday, March 17, 2010

TIME: 1:15 PM

PLACE: Conference Room 225

Re: S.C.R. 110

Chair Sakamoto, Vice-Chair Kidani, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Education and Housing:

Directors

Julie Ford

Rachel Moriyama

Steven Nagata, Esq.

Paul Singer

Allene Suemori, Esq.

Frederick W. Tucher

Executive Director

Michael K. Moore

I am the Executive Director of Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii (LDAH); Hawaii's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) under IDEA 2004. LDAH's mission is to enhance education, work and life opportunities for children and youth with disabilities by empowering them and their families through information, training and mentoring, and by public outreach and advocacy. LDAH's vision through the provision of its services is to see that people have choice and equal access to all education, work and life opportunities regardless of their disabilities.

LDAH submits this testimony in support of S.C.R. 110. It, furthermore, supports the recommendations made by the Hawaii Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (HIDA), in that S.C.R. 110 "should be amended to specifically provide that the University of Hawaii be represented in the working group. The University is responsible for preparing so many of Hawaii's teachers to meet eligibility criteria for teacher certification in the State – it would seem its participation in the working group is essential."

As Hawaii's PTI, LDAH has a responsibility to help students with disabilities receive access to appropriate educational opportunities and related supports and services necessary to succeed despite their disabilities. We do this primarily by working with, educating and providing mentoring and advocacy for parents related to the specific needs of their children. We provide disability specific information and resources and provide assistance with understanding laws related to children with disabilities. LDAH's education and training program is made equally available to educators and other providers serving these same children.

As our programs and services are provided statewide, we have a finger on the pulse of the state related to the educational needs of students with disabilities. More specifically, parents and educators commonly state how deeply *educators* and *service providers* desire, and need, more specialized training in the areas of Learning Disabilities. It is imperative that empirically based practices be made available to our

up and coming teachers. And, as Learning Disabilities make up the single largest group of disabilities experienced by our children, any attention given to this topic that would contribute to early identification of needs and effective response strategies is warranted and has the full support of LDAH.

LDAH appreciates the leadership of the Senate Committee on Education & Housing on this matter, and welcomes the opportunity to participate in, or otherwise support, the working group.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael K. Moore", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael K. Moore
Executive Director