
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO
REINFORCE INSTRUCTION REGARDING AMERICAN CIVICS.

1 WHEREAS, Act 51, Session Laws of Hawaii 2004, declares that
2 "ultimately education must do no less than advance the endowment
3 of human culture itself, so that each succeeding generation
4 finds itself further along the road towards peace, social
5 justice, and environmental sustainability in a society guided by
6 creativity, compassion, and curiosity"; and
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8 WHEREAS, current efforts in educational reform from
9 kindergarten through grade 12, both in Hawaii and nationally,
10 focus predominantly on students' academic performance and
11 college and workplace readiness and overlook the concept that
12 actively preparing students to be engaged, productive citizens
13 is one of the foundational purposes of public education in the
14 United States; and
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16 WHEREAS, such an exclusive focus on achievement in English
17 language arts, mathematics, and science by students neglects a
18 key purpose of public education, which is to create an informed,
19 participating citizenry; and
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21 WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Horace Mann, and the
22 framers of our nation all espoused free, universal public
23 education as a key element necessary to maintain the integrity
24 of a representative democracy; and
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26 WHEREAS, our democratic republic will be sustained when
27 young people are aware of their changing cultural and physical
28 environments; know the past; read, write and think deeply; and
29 act in ways that promote the common good; and



1 WHEREAS, there may always be differing perspectives on
2 these objectives, but the goal of producing knowledgeable,
3 reflective, and active citizens is universal; and
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5 WHEREAS, research has demonstrated that there is a call for
6 students to become more prepared for the challenges of college,
7 career, and civic life (Bellanca and Brandt, 2010; DiGiacomo,
8 Linn, Monthey, Pack, and Wyatt, 2013; Partnership for 21st
9 Century Schools, 2011); and
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11 WHEREAS, public schools remain the best avenue to ensure
12 that citizens are prepared to possess the knowledge, skills,
13 dispositions, and opportunities to practice productive
14 participation in the processes and experiences of civic life,
15 including political engagement, community service, and
16 altruistic behaviors; and
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18 WHEREAS, these skills and actions of civic engagement in a
19 representative democracy cannot be taught only by giving
20 information and completing written tests but must also be
21 developed through direct instruction and involvement in
22 simulations of democratic processes and the problem-solving
23 process of addressing community issues by all age groups; and
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25 WHEREAS, a strong academic program of social sciences,
26 including civics, together with the integration of democratic
27 processes and simulations at all levels within the public-school
28 system can enhance free society as a whole in Hawaii and
29 nationally as well as within individual students in a reciprocal
30 way; and
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32 WHEREAS, more than ever, youth need the intellectual power
33 to recognize societal problems; ask pertinent questions and
34 develop robust investigations into them; consider possible
35 solutions and consequences; and act upon what they learn with
36 the capability and commitment to repeat that process as long as
37 necessary to navigate successfully through the worlds of
38 college, career, and civic life; and
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40 WHEREAS, the Strategic Plan (2011-2018) of the Department
41 of Education specifically states in the section on Core Values
42 that "Hawaii students value connections (with the environment, a
43 larger community and a global society) and become stewards to
44 help make our world a better place"; and



1 WHEREAS, Objective 1C of the same Strategic Plan states
2 that "students are connected to their school and community to
3 develop love of learning and contribute to a vibrant civic
4 life"; now, therefore,
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6 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
7 Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
8 Session of 2014, the Senate concurring, that the Department of
9 Education is strongly urged to strengthen and reinforce the
10 civic readiness, education, and engagement of students from
11 kindergarten through grade 12 in all public schools; and
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is
14 also urged to enhance social-studies courses and integrate
15 content, processes, strategies, and proven practices in civic
16 education within each public school to expand the knowledge,
17 skills, and capabilities of public-school students in
18 kindergarten through grade 12 to be informed, active citizens
19 participating in an integrated world; and
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21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
22 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
23 Board of Education, Superintendent of Education, President of
24 the Hawaii State Teachers Association, Executive Director of the
25 Hawaii Government Employees Association, State Executive
26 Director of the Hawaii Elementary and Middle School
27 Administrators' Association, Chair of the Education Commission
28 of the States and National Center for Learning and Civic
29 Engagement, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Center for
30 Civic Education, and Executive Director of the Campaign for the
31 Civic Mission of Schools.

