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HB414 PROPOSING A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO HAWAII CONSTITUTION RELATING TO EDUCATION

Position – Strong Support (45 copies for Distribution)

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Rep. Roy M. Takumi, Chair

Rep. Lyla B. Berg, Ph.D., Vice Chair

Thursday, February 1, 2007

2:00 pm, Room 309

According to Kids Voting Hawaii, 97,508 students logged on-line to vote during the 2006 General Election. The first student council issue identified on the ballot asked: "Should the Student Member of the Board of Education have equal voting privileges as adult members?" A resounding 79% of the students who answered this question voted "Yes".

Young people are not alone in raising the subject of student leadership on Boards of Education. The National Association of State Boards of Education affirmed: "the contribution of students to the education policymaking process is without question an asset to the states and local communities that presently have students serving on boards of education." There are currently fourteen states that have student input on the state board. In California and Massachusetts, students on the Board of Education are full voting members on all matters before the board.

I am testifying in strong support of HB414 because I believe young people who make it through the ranks of their local student council and are elected to the Hawaii State Board of Education are capable of voting responsibly. We have a choice to continue marginalizing student board members as "children who should be seen and not heard" or we can embrace their leadership potential and honor their vote as the ultimate manifestation of "self-directed learning".