

----- Forwarded by Alex Da Silva/SUPT/HIDOE on 08/12/2011 04:42 PM -----

From: "Natasha Chappel" <hs@paachawaii.org>
To: <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>
Date: 08/12/2011 04:11 PM
Subject: BOE Policy 4540

I am writing to REJECT the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 regarding the reduction of social studies credits from 4 to 3 and the elimination of Participation in a Democracy as a required social studies course. I am IN FAVOR of KEEPING Social Studies requirements as they currently stand.

In my 12 years in education, I have seen hundreds of students discover their passions and find themselves interested in things they had never even heard of before: from food security, to APEC, economic globalization, and microfinance. I have encouraged students to learn about these kinds of global issues and have seen the proverbial light bulb go off many times. I've seen college majors and career goals change after their initial exposure. I've seen their motivation level and sense of purpose shoot up, and I've seen their sense of empowerment grow as they feel like a player who can make a difference in the global community. I've noticed that students often need encouragement to take on something new. They sometimes don't know what they like and don't like. Without a social studies requirement, many of them will not choose an elective like global studies, or they will opt to take classes that they perceive as "easy," especially those in their senior year, or final semester of school.

In particular, I also oppose the motion to eliminate Participation in Democracy in the schools. This will result in a loss to our community, and a serious blow to our democracy if we graduate the next generation without civic education. If students do not know how to participate in our democracy, we can expect that many will choose not to.

Thank you very much for considering my testimony in favor of REJECTING the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 and for KEEPING the social studies requirements as they currently stand.

Sincerely,

Natasha Chappel
Pacific and Asian Affairs Council
High School Program Director
1601 East-West Road, 4th Floor
Honolulu, HI 96848
(808) 944-7759
www.paachawaii.org

**Testimony of Melissa Seu Beavers, Social Studies Teacher, Moanalua High School
For General Business Meeting, Tuesday, August 16, 2011, 1:30 p.m.**

**Regarding agenda item: Report of Student Achievement Committee -- Board Policy
4540**

Aloha Chairman Horner and members of the Board of Education. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today regarding Board Policy 4540.

My name is Melissa Seu Beavers. I have taught social studies for 8 years at Moanalua High School. Prior to becoming a teacher, I practiced law for 13 years. For the reasons set forth below, I oppose the proposal to reduce the number of social studies credits required for graduation from 4 credits to 3.

At a time when the nation's goal and that of the Hawai'i State Department of Education (DOE), the Hawai'i Board of Education (BOE), and the Hawai'i State Legislature is to produce college and career ready high school graduates who can compete in a global society, it makes no sense to cut back on social studies when social studies is the only subject whose primary purpose is to produce globally aware, informed young people who can contribute to and compete in a global society. According to U.S. Secretary of State Arne Duncan, "To be on track today for college and careers, students need to show that they can analyze and solve complex problems, communicate clearly, synthesize information, apply knowledge, and generalize learning to other settings."¹ These are precisely the skills that social studies emphasizes.

As an attorney and an advocate, I am also frustrated by the proposal to reduce the required social studies credits because I see it as a disservice to our students and our community. As an attorney turned teacher, my primary goal is to equip my students to be informed contributing participants in society, regardless of whether they continue on to college after graduation or go directly into the workforce. Every student should have access to a social studies curriculum that will help them make informed decisions as adults such as who to vote for, whether they should vote for a proposed change in the city charter, how the legislative and judicial system works, and what their rights and responsibilities are with respect to those systems. They should be able to analyze and evaluate the policy decisions made by their leaders and how those decisions affect them. They need a firm historical understanding so they can see the similarities between present day infringements on civil rights of certain minority groups and those of the Japanese Americans who were sent to internment camps during World War II and take steps to prevent history from repeating. They need to know about world organizations like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and why APEC's meeting here is so important.

Three years is simply not enough time to provide the necessary information and experience to equip our graduates for the future. The first three years of high school provide students with a basic historical foundation. The 4th year social studies elective courses then broaden and expand student knowledge, understanding and perspectives, allowing students to take the information they acquired in their history and civics classes

¹ Duncan, Arne. "The Social Studies Are Essential To A Well-Rounded Education." *SocialEducation* May. - Jun. 2011: 124-125. Print.

and apply that information in more specific settings and situations relevant to their world. For example, in elective classes such as American Problems and Economics, students can take the information from their civics and history classes to analyze and evaluate the government's plans to reduce the national deficit or evaluate the validity of a political candidate's proposals for economic reform

Contrary to the goals of the DOE, reducing the required number of social studies credits will result in less rigorous graduation requirements because, given the option, many teenagers will not sign up for a social studies elective class. I took an informal poll of my 11th grade World History class and out of 24 students, 15 said they would not choose a social studies elective class if it was not required.

Hawai'i's high school students will also be less prepared for college and careers if they are no longer required to take a 4th year of social studies credits, as those social studies elective classes provide specialized knowledge applicable to college study and careers.

Supporters of the proposed change claim that reducing the number of required social studies credits and increasing the required elective credits will provide flexibility and opportunity for students interested in science, technology, engineering and math careers to pursue their career interests. However, the six elective credits currently required for graduation provide more than enough flexibility and opportunity for students to pursue their career interests in high school. In addition, teenagers are too young and inexperienced to be able to decide for certain what their career paths should be. High school should expose them to a wide breadth of information, ideas, and experiences so they can make fully informed decisions about their future.

Furthermore, careers in science, technology, engineering and math cannot operate in a vacuum. Social studies classes teach students to think about the morals and ethics that accompany decisions about the use and application of technology.

Finally, reducing the number of required social studies credits will result in less social studies elective classes being offered. This is because the number of social studies elective classes offered depends on class enrollment. Reducing the number of required social studies credits will result in less enrollment which will then reduce the number of social studies elective courses students have to choose from.

If you are truly committed to providing a rigorous curriculum that will produce college and career ready high school graduates who can compete in a global society and who are informed responsible citizens, I urge you to reject the proposal to reduce the required social studies credits from 4 to 3.

July 4, 2011

To: Members of the Board of Education
c/o Mr. Donald Horner

From: James Mak, Professor Emeritus of Economics
University of Hawaii at Manoa
E-mail: jmak@hawaii.edu
Phone (Home): 808-395-6921

Re: Reducing social studies credits for graduation

I am writing to urge the BOE to consider keeping the current 4 credit requirement for social studies. I am greatly concerned that reducing the current requirement from 4 to 3 credits would further reduce the amount of economics and financial education in Hawaii's public schools. I believe that student enrollment in economics in Hawaii's public schools has actually declined since the mid-1980s when I was the volunteer executive director of the Hawaii Council on Economic Education. Today, our students need more, not less, exposure to economics and financial literacy.

In May, I spent nearly a week in Washington D.C. on my way to and return from Istanbul. While in D.C., I read in the Washington Post that the State of Virginia had just passed legislation requiring Virginia students to take a formal course in economics and personal finance before graduation. The explanation for this new requirement was it was a survival skill that was essential to have for kids. I totally agree. As defined pension plans are increasingly being phased out, our young people are forced to plan for their own financial futures. Not only must they know how to manage their personal finances, they need to understand that wise management requires that they also know what is going on in the broader economy (and indeed the world) and why. Economics and financial economics are not esoteric subjects; they are essential to everyone's survival. Cutting back on the social science requirement will only increase the likelihood that even fewer students are exposed to such essential knowledge.

Thank you for your consideration.

From: <mrs.young.b3@gmail.com>

I am the Senior Project Coordinator at Aiea High School. I attended the meeting of the Student Achievement Committee on Tuesday, August 19th.

I would like to offer my perspective on a couple of issues regarding Senior Project.

The most essential ideas I want to communicate are regarding the timing of making Senior Project optional. While I feel strongly that Senior Project should remain as a graduation requirement, it seemed that issue had already been decided. If you are still considering this aspect, please let me know and I will provide testimony.

It is important that you understand that all the professionals involved in implementing the previous Board's policies regarding Senior Project have been extremely dedicated and have been fighting an uphill battle

with both students and peers. The graduation requirements surpass the class structure within our schools in that Juniors are aware of, ask advice from, and pay close attention to how the Seniors they know perform their Senior Project. The Sophomores and Freshman also learn from the upperclassmen and the word about Senior Project is spreading. Building a positive, effective Senior Project will take years to develop. Change is difficult and it will take more time help students understand that a successful Senior Project is an impressive and worthwhile accomplishment, making the effort a meaningful learning experience.

If you do, in fact, make Senior Project optional, I respectfully and strongly suggest two considerations:

1) Make the change regardless of class: If the incoming Freshman (be it class of 2016 or 2018) are not required to complete Senior Project, the Seniors, as well as the Juniors and Sophomores will be disenfranchised creating a difficult situation for the teachers to maintain morale and quality of product. If the value of Senior Project is diminished, which is the perception of making it an option rather than a requirement, then why require certain classes to continue with the moot exercise? Make the change as of the following school year, i.e., as of 2013 so all students in a school may opt in or out. No student will complain about having to do less work; and if they or their parents want the student to complete the Senior Project, it can be done as an elective.

2) Announce the change in 4th quarter or during the summer, after that year's Senior Projects are finished. For all the reasons stated above, depreciating the effort required for Senior Project will have an acute reaction for the Seniors who are in the middle of the process.

From: Mara Miller <maramiller3@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

I am against Proposal 4540 to reduce the Social Studies graduation requirements for Hawaii's students. Please don't weaken Social Studies education in Hawaii.

From: Alisha Leisek <a.leisek@capitol.hawaii.gov>

To: "'boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us'" <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

Cc: Alda Mae Takabayashi <a.takabayashi@capitol.hawaii.gov>

Aloha!

Attached is a letter from Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland regarding the reduction of social studies credits.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

Alisha Leisek
Office of Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
State Capitol, Room 226
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-6130; Fax (808) 586-6131
a.leisek@capitol.hawaii.gov

From: Gail Sandstrom <gdsand@hawaiiantel.net>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us
Brian,

Your email was provided so that we might let you know our position AGAINST lowering the social studies requirement from 4 to 3 credits.

I will make it brief. Everyone speaks about achieving world peace. Unfortunately, that will never be achieved because there is a lack of communication. The reason for this lack of communication is people do not understand the different cultures. I believe that social studies teaches our children to be sensitive to other cultures by learning about them. Reducing the number of credits required for graduation will only hurt the ability of the students to learn about and be sensitive to other cultures. If we truly want world peace, give our students the opportunity to take classes in sociology, psychology, global studies, and other elective social studies courses.

Thank you for listening.
Gail Sandstrom

From: Tracy Takahashi/WAIPAHH/HIDOE

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Please do not change the existing Social Studies Requirements!

My name is Tracy Takahashi & I am honored to be a high school social studies teacher. I do not take this position lightly. It is my responsibility to ensure that students have a greater understanding of how society works, what has happened in the past, and what can happen in the future if we don't address the present.

I believe that if you change the social studies requirements for graduation from four credits to three, this will have a detrimental impact on the well-being of our overall population. Here's why:

The content taught in senior social studies is CRITICAL for a healthy society

Psychology - understanding personalities & human development = better understanding when working with others
Sociology - recognizing the various social systems that make up a society & how each impacts the other (ex: the direct impact of failing families on the economy)
Economics - who couldn't benefit from learning how to BALANCE THE BUDGET?!
World Religion & Cultures - knowledge is power. understanding others = tolerance = less violence

I understand the desire to offer more choices to our students. But there's also a negative impact of offering too many choices. High school seniors are still youth. And if they are given the option of taking a "fun elective" or an "academic elective" they will choose what they think is easiest - not what is best for them in the long run.

The decision to decrease social studies will only harm Hawaii's future.
PLEASE DO NOT CHANGE THE SOCIAL STUDIES REQUIREMENTS.

Thank you, Tracy Takahashi

From: Wade Hondo/BALDWIN/HIDOE
To: BOE Hawaii/BOE/HIDOE@HIDOE

Dear Board of Education members:

Aloha. Please consider keeping the social studies requirements as is.

By taking away the credit, kids lose the opportunity to learn about the world around them, to learn from cultures successes and failures. History is the learning about the world, a world that they are going to be productive members in. Without it, they will lose the chance to learn about significant events and what role it played in their life right now.

Again, please keep the social studies requirement as is. To lose it is to tell kids that history is not important, that the struggles that their parents, grandparents, great grandparents, etc. went through had no impact on the world today.

Thank you.

wade hondo

From: <harney.jan@gmail.com>
To: <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

It is amazing to think that requiring only 3 years of social studies credits is even being considered. Social studies allows students to think for themselves, learn to be civic minded, learn their history and become actively involved in their communities. Topics taught in social studies classes are crucial to educate informed citizens and also adds a great deal in the way of reading and writing skills which are extremely crucial in the years to come in the lives of students. Please realize that it would be a disservice to the students of Hawaii public schools

to limit the number of years of required social studies credits to three.

From: BUK1818@aol.com

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

To all BOE members.

Please listen to this: As a BOE member, all subjects in education need addressing, not just reading and math.

All subjects and all students are important in Hawaii. Cutting out Social Studies for math and reading is not going to help. Cutting out Art and PE and sports for reading and math is not going to help. Rewarding math and reading teachers and not PE and ART teachers is not going to help.

from special education teacher, Carlo Marchetti

<http://oldschoolteach.wordpress.com/2011/07/31/matt-damon%e2%80%99s-speech-to-teachers%e2%80%99-rally/>

Matt Damon's Speech to Teachers at SOS Rally

Matt Damon's Speech to Teachers at SOS Rally

31 Jul

I love this speech! I wonder how many politicians heard or read it?

I flew overnight from Vancouver to be with you today. I landed in New York a few hours ago and caught a flight down here because I needed to tell you all in person that I think you're awesome.

I was raised by a teacher. My mother is a professor of early childhood education. And from the time I went to kindergarten through my senior year in high school, I went to public schools. I wouldn't trade that education and experience for anything.

I had incredible teachers. As I look at my life today, the things I value most about myself — my imagination, my love of acting, my passion for writing, my love of learning, my curiosity — all come from how I was parented and taught.

And none of these qualities that I've just mentioned — none of these qualities that I prize so deeply, that have brought me so much joy, that have brought me so much professional success — none of these qualities that make me who I am ... can be tested.

I said before that I had incredible teachers. And that's true. But it's more than that. My teachers were EMPOWERED to teach me. Their time wasn't taken up with a bunch of test prep — this silly drill and kill nonsense that any serious person knows doesn't promote real learning. No, my teachers were free to approach me and every other kid in that classroom like an individual puzzle. They took so much care in figuring out who we were and how to best make the lessons resonate

with each of us. They were empowered to unlock our potential. They were allowed to be teachers.

Now don't get me wrong. I did have a brush with standardized tests at one point. I remember because my mom went to the principal's office and said, 'My kid ain't taking that. It's stupid, it won't tell you anything and it'll just make him nervous.' That was in the '70s when you could talk like that.

I shudder to think that these tests are being used today to control where funding goes.

I don't know where I would be today if my teachers' job security was based on how I performed on some standardized test. If their very survival as teachers was based on whether I actually fell in love with the process of learning but rather if I could fill in the right bubble on a test. If they had to spend most of their time desperately drilling us and less time encouraging creativity and original ideas; less time knowing who we were, seeing our strengths and helping us realize our talents.

I honestly don't know where I'd be today if that was the type of education I had. I sure as hell wouldn't be here. I do know that.

This has been a horrible decade for teachers. I can't imagine how demoralized you must feel. But I came here today to deliver an important message to you: As I get older, I appreciate more and more the teachers that I had growing up. And I'm not alone. There are millions of people just like me.

So the next time you're feeling down, or exhausted, or unappreciated, or at the end of your rope; the next time you turn on the TV and see yourself called "overpaid;" the next time you encounter some simple-minded, punitive policy that's been driven into your life by some corporate reformer who has literally never taught anyone anything. ... Please know that there are millions of us behind you. You have an army of regular people standing right behind you, and our appreciation for what you do is so deeply felt. We love you, we thank you and we will always have your back.

From: "John M. Knox" <jmk@lava.net>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Testimony of John Knox to Hawai'i State Board of Education Opposing Reduction of Social Studies

[For General Business Meeting of August 16, 2011 – Topic of Revised Graduation Requirements. I hope to present this testimony in person but am not yet sure I can do so.]

Although I speak as an individual, in the past decade or so I have presided over the boards of both the Hawai'i Economic Association and the Hawai'i Council on Economic Education, and I was the first chair of the Urban Land Institute's (ULI's) Hawai'i UrbanPlan program, a high school curriculum combining economics and civics issues, and I thus sat on the ULI Board as well.

Boards of directors generally make broad policy and strategic decisions. The decision

facing this Board of Education today is not an easy one: What constitutes a balanced and well-rounded education for all of Hawai'i's youth?

When you consider course requirements, you are considering all the purposes inherent in education – giving individual students maximal opportunities, providing employers with the skilled workers they need, and assuring this society of citizens with as much knowledge to make solid economic and political decisions as voters, as constituents, and perhaps as elected or as appointed office holders such as yourselves.

Reducing the number of required social studies courses means reducing the percentage of Hawai'i public school graduates with some exposure to economics, political science, geography, or cultural anthropology. These electives would likely languish if students were only required to take history classes – and without the perspective and interpretation that comes from economics, political science, and so forth, history too often devolves into a boring montage of names, date, and events. Without those additional social-study perspectives, too many students study history ... but don't learn a damned thing about it!

That does not produce the citizens we need, and producing those citizens is part of your difficult mandate to provide a well-rounded and balanced education. Please do not reduce the required number of social studies credits.

Mahalo!

-- John Knox, jmk@lava.net

John M. Knox PhD, President
John M. Knox & Associates, Inc
1001 Bishop St., ASB 1542
Honolulu HI 96813
Phone 808-523-1352 Fax 808-523-1353
Cell 808-342-3749 E-Mail jmk@lava.net

From: Cheri Nakamura <cheri.nakamura@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

HE'E Coalition
841 Bishop Street, Ste 301
Honolulu, HI 96813 96816
Tel: 808-926-1530
www.HEECoalition.org

August 9, 2011

Hawaii State Board of Education

P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu HI 96804
(808) 586-3334 / Fax: (808) 586-3433 / E-mail:
boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Board Policy 4540: HE'E Coalition Comments

Dear Chair Horner, Vice Chair De Lima and Board Members:

Hui for Excellence in Education, or "HE'E," is a statewide coalition of diverse stakeholders committed to working collaboratively to identify opportunities to improve public education in Hawai'i. HE'E seeks to be the focal point for community and parent engagement while serving as a public resource for educational policy. HE'E is made up of voting, non-voting members (list attached), individuals and policy makers.

HE'E has not taken a position on this issue. However, the members have gathered national data that may be useful in your deliberations. Please review the links below, which provide detailed data on graduation requirements and social studies requirements.

• Education Commission of the States National Graduation Requirements: <http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=735>

• Education Commission of the States Social Studies Requirements: <http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=115>

• State College and Career Ready High School Graduation Requirements from Achieve.org: <http://www.achieve.org/files/CCRDiplomaTable-Feb-2011.pdf>

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

From: Sheryl Ogawa/PAHOAH/HIDOE
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us
Cc: Dennis Tynan/NANAKULIHI/HIDOE@HIDOE

- **I am Sheryl Ogawa, teacher, from Pahoa High & Intermediate School**
- **Meetings on this matter will be held August 16, 2011**
- **Agenda Item: General Business Meeting: Social Studies Credit Reduction**

Aloha Board of Education Members,

Please do not change the credit requirement for Social Studies, for the following reasons: 1) Social Studies supports the requirement for the Senior Project trend, 2) Social Studies supports citizenship and community building, and 3) Social Studies is an "inclusion" class: a sample of real life.

Social Studies curriculum provides examples for students to use the Senior Project as a vehicle to make changes. Current events, history, civics, economics, politics - locally and globally are taught in Social Studies classes. Where else can students find examples to use to challenge their minds to even begin to work on a Senior Project? In the Middle School, the Judiciary advocates through a workshop, Project Citizen. This is the ideal start for the Senior Project. Students work in groups to investigate and report out findings on issues that are near and dear to them. For example Bullying. If not for Social Studies, where would they be able to use inquiry to internalize the need for change?

Social Studies curriculum supports citizenship and community building and awareness through debates, town hall meetings, and project based curriculum. In most classes, loud discussions are not welcomed, but in Social Studies lively debates are the norm. Where else can students freely express their ideas? ideas that are wild, but nevertheless thought provoking, and necessary to facilitate thinking that will hopefully lead to change.

Social Studies classes are used to promote inclusion of all walks of life - even students who are in fully self contained classes often are put in Social Studies classes to help general education students know what is out there in the real world.

Math and English classes are often segregated by ability and skill level, Social Studies - we take them all - in one setting. THAT is real life.

Not only do I advocate keeping 4 credits for Social Studies a requirement, I want Math and Science to increase to 4 credits too.

Why should we be expecting less while we are faced with becoming #2 or #5 in the World? Increase the requirements to beef things up. Reducing things is moving backwards.

Respectfully submitted:

Sheryl S. Ogawa

From: Eric Berger/KEAAUH/HIDOE

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Dear Chairman Horner and Members of the Board of Education.

I am writing to **REJECT** the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 regarding the reduction of social studies credits from 4 to 3 and the elimination of Participation in a Democracy as a required social studies course. I am **IN FAVOR** of **KEEPING** Social Studies requirements as they currently stand.

Our students must have more guidance/information on these subjects, as I find they come into my classroom with little information about the world. Geography/Global Studies should be a mandatory class, with all students required to access the knowledge before graduating. Eliminate it?? No please -rethink this.

Thank you very much for considering my testimony in favor of **REJECTING** the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 and for **KEEPING** the social studies requirements as they currently stand.

Sincerely,
Eric Berger, Social Studies Teacher
Keaau High School

From: "George Atta" <gatta@group70int.com>

To: <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

I oppose the reduction of the social studies credit requirement from 4 credits to 3.

I think a proper understanding of civics and economics are crucial to a persons participation in our democracy. The values captured in social studies curriculum strengthen the glue that holds society together and enhances the compassion that highlights the best in human interaction. Without these things the sense of community disappears and public dialogue become a self centered individualistic exercise for personal gain.

The recent angry and partisan rhetoric of the debates in Washington about the debt ceiling and budget cuts and taxes reflects the worst of a government losing a sense of the greater good of the nation. Much of the debate was full of self serving argumentation and ignorance. It tells me not only that we need more education in this field but a reexamination of the fundamental values that our society is based upon. This discussion takes place in social studies classes.

I understand and sympathize with the desire to give students more choice and the wish to expand and emphasize STEM classes. Still, I think it should not happen on the back of the social studies curriculum. Just as budget reform and debt reduction should not be born on the backs of the most needy using medicare and social security, social studies should not have to suffer to increase test scores and mathematical and scientific literacy. All have to be achieved. This should not be a zero sum game. That is a free market mentality that should not dictate the educational debate.

Please find some other path.

George I. Atta

From: Pam Wakukawa/CASTLE/HIDOE

To: boe hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

August 12, 2011

Dear Chairman Horner and Members of the Board of Education:

I am writing in regards to the proposed plan to reduce the required number of social studies credits from 4 credits to 3. I am asking you to **retain** the current social studies requirement.

If the number of required courses was reduced, the social studies elective courses would become general elective courses. If this were to occur, most of the students in my economics course (84 out of 107) said that they would have chosen "easier" elective classes, such as creative dance or photography instead of economics, even though they believe that economic literacy is essential to survival in today's marketplace. Most seem to enjoy learning about financial institutions, the role of government in the economy, investments, and international trade once they begin to participate in the course as they realize that economic principles are directly relevant to their lives.

Thank you for considering my testimony in favor of rejecting the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 and retaining the current social studies requirement.

Sincerely,
Pamela Wakukawa
Teacher, Castle High School

From: Heather Demers-Keller <mrshdk@gmail.com>

To: "boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us" <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

You have been forgotten. That is what we will be telling our ancestors and our forefathers. In today's interconnected world it is beyond vital that our children learn about diverse cultures and what it means to be an American citizen in a global community. I lost my brother in 9/11 because a society refused to incorporate social studies. Had they had a better understanding of different cultures my brother would be here today. If you take away even a year of social studies you are setting our students up for failure. They will lose their cultural identity, our history and our ability to understand. We are a nation of immigrants in a country founded on the teachings of historians. Do not deprive our children their heritage and legacy which will one day be preserved for their descendants. Please don't let my brother be forgotten. Let our children learn from our past. Keep four credits of social studies and give our children a chance to prove why our students are the most knowledgeable and the best. United we stand, divided we fall.

Sincerely,
Heather Demers-Keller

From: Dwayne Wada <dc.wada@hawaiiantel.net>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Dear Chairman Horner and Members of the Board of Education:

I am writing to **REJECT** the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 regarding the reduction of social studies credits from 4 to 3 and the elimination of Participation in a Democracy as a required social studies course. I am **IN FAVOR** of **KEEPING** Social Studies requirements as they currently stand.

Whenever a change such as this is proposed, it's important to evaluate it on the basis of benefits versus costs. Will the change cause greater harm than good? Where else in a high school curriculum would civics be systematically taught? Isn't civics fundamental to promoting generations of educated and involved citizens? Aligned with the Common Core Standards, social studies teachers teach research skills such as evaluating sources of information, incorporate "using multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems,...[and work] to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making."

In addition, there are some important and recent changes coming down the pipe from the federal government regarding NCLB. Regardless of what may seem like compelling reasons for change, this is probably not the best time to implement major changes in the high school curricula.

Thank you very much for considering my testimony in favor of **REJECTING** the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 and for **KEEPING** the social studies requirements as they currently stand.

Sincerely,
Christine H. Wada, Teacher, Maui High School

From: Mara Miller <maramiller3@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

I am submitting this testimony to the BOE & Student Achievement Committee for the upcoming meeting, Tuesday August 16.

Mara Miller
Mara Miller, Ph.D.
Consultant & Independent Scholar
Philosophy, Art History, & Asian Studies

<http://www.maramiller.info>
2452 Tusitala St., Apt. 1106

Honolulu, HI 96815
(808) 354-1737
AlohaPOSSE: www.alohaposse.org

Twelve Reasons Hawai`i Should Protect Our Social Studies Education

Mara Miller

Many (including myself) have written about our continued need for keeping current levels of social studies requirements for the public schools (that is, for the Board of Education to vote down Policy 4540)—in the *The Hawaii Independent*, the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, *Honolulu Civil Beat*.

I agree with it all. But I think the focus on these proposed changes to our current curriculum are drawing attention from Hawai`i's real needs—which are to **strengthen** social studies education. Here are twelve reasons why Hawai`i should be a leader in social studies education—not a blind follower of models developed by other states.

Twelve Reasons Hawai`i Needs the Full Four Social Studies Credits for Our Students

1. We already do—in some ways. Our state's *current* social studies program shows exceptional achievement, as evidenced by our participation in History Day and National History Day (through the Hawai`i Council for the Humanities), Kids Voting Hawai`i, We the People, etc. (For some photos, see the Aloha POSSE website: http://www.alohaposse.org/alohaposse/Aloha_POSSE_home.html .) There is a national trend to increase requirements in social studies—Hawai`i is already at the top. Like the states with the best curricula, Hawai`i requires a “civics” class (called here Participation in Democracy).

2. Hawai`i well-positioned for this leadership role because we are already a national—and even international—leader in cross-cultural living and knowledge. For our own sakes, we should capitalize on our experience, our position, and our expertise. We should do this for our survival, our happiness, our health, our prosperity, and the pleasures of doing it.

Two sets of events over the past six months underscore the complexity of Hawai`i's ties to just one country, Japan. After the earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan in March, we—like the rest of the world—were first mesmerized by the images, then galvanized by our compassion to mobilize aid, and we were shocked and horrified by the destruction of the nuclear plant that quickly followed. Many of us in Hawai`i have ties of ancestry or marriage to Japanese people. Many others of us have dedicated decades of our lives to studying Japan, learning the language, teaching its culture, trading with its companies, and so on—for Hawai`i has some of the strongest Asian studies institutions in the world, including the East-West Center, the Honolulu Academy of Arts, the state university and its several area studies centers, the Chado Urasenke Tankokai (Tea Ceremony) Hawai`i Association, the Sawai Koto Kai, and on and on. Many more of us

belong to professional and business associations of Asian-Americans and connecting to people in Asia.

Yet (at least judging by television news—admittedly not always the best gauge) we were terrified

at the possible implications for ourselves as well. Would the earthquake set off a tsunami here as well? Given the prevailing winds, would the radioactive cloud from Fukushima reach us? Were the vegetables and other products we were importing still safe to eat and drink? And eventually, how would this affect Japanese tourism, a notable component of the state economy?

“We have nothing to fear but fear itself,” President Franklin Delano Roosevelt told us in his 1932 inaugural address. And half the time that’s true. But which half? We need scientists to help us determine this—and as Scott Robertson, professor of Computer and Information Sciences at UH-Manoa has been writing lately, scientists increasingly depend upon social studies and intimate knowledge of other cultures to do even their most basic work. (Increasingly, yes—but this has always been true, at least for modern science. The philosopher and mathematician Leibniz recognized the need for international scientific communication through organized societies, and they began to be organized, in the late 1600s.)

We sometimes feel we must choose for our students between social studies and other subjects. But the choice between social studies or math and science is a false one. We need social studies—specialists in economics, government, communication, ethics, philosophy—and of course language and the arts—to help us overcome our immediate ignorance (what is happening?), then interpreting the overwhelming amount of information, and finally decide what to do. These, of course, are continuing loops, as we discover new areas of ignorance, provide new answers, and implement new courses of action over and over throughout the months.

More recently, we commemorated on August 6 and 9 (as we always do) the lives lost in the United States’ atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that ended the Second World War in 1945. Many in Hiroshima at the time had thought their city was spared until then—and would continue to be spared—because that area had sent so many emigrants to the U.S. Not so many years ago, the Smithsonian Institution tried to exhibit the Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, within a nuanced exhibit that tried to convey, within the military and political contexts, the moral and political complexities of that act. The result was an assault from many sides.

Hawai`i has been living with the moral, social, military, and political complexities of the bombings and the war itself for decades. It is one of the few sites in the country to commemorate the atomic bombings and their deaths, and to have a permanent site dedicated to this purpose (the Nagasaki Peace Bell).

But we are also always keenly aware of having ourselves been victims of direct Japanese attack in World War II—the only state with this claim. We have a museum dedicated to the attacks on Pearl Harbor and the bombing of the Arizona as well. Just as we have museums that celebrate the missions to Hawai`i, the preceding—and continuing—Hawaiian and Polynesian cultures, the early economic immigrants from Asia, and the monarchy that sought to adjust to a modernizing (and Westernizing) world. Just as we have others that celebrate the rest of Asia and the Pacific and Europe and the Americas—and sometimes (one thinks of Doris Duke’s estate-museum Shangrila) their deliberate mix.

Here in Hawai`i we don’t deny either side of the complex realities that were WWII—or modernization, or “Westernization.”

Hawai`i should be leading the way for the nation in social studies education.

And by the way, how do we “fix” Hawai`i’s economic problems ensuing from losing so many Japanese tourists? One way has been to increase the number of tourists from China—by initiating direct flights to Honolulu from Shanghai. The leaders in the tourism and airline industries, finance, and government who pushed this initiative through—and the Chinese tourists with the curiosity and interest (and money) to take advantage of it—have all needed—and been able—to rely on a very high level of “social studies” knowledge and understanding, that they long ago made instinctive.

3. Hawai`i’s economy depends upon tourism and trade. We need to learn about other cultures’ solutions—and communicate (and sometimes sell!) ours to them.

4. But we should do it for the sake of other people—and other cultures—as well. We all benefit when we all prosper.

The Modern era was defined by the prospering of some people at the expense of others—by the exploitations of colonialism, industrialization, slavery, and so on. But more and more economists have been joining the humanitarian voices of religious and civil rights leaders (and the occasional rock star) to say we can change this.

The post-Modern period can come to be defined not by the exacerbation of these evils, but by distributive economic and political justice. We have institutional and other tools that didn’t exist, including the UN Millennium Project, massive foundations for economic and health-care justice, etc.—not to mention information and communications technologies. We *can do* this. Hawai`i must take its part.

5. As a philosopher, I must say it: we must do it because it is *right*. Social studies education is valuable (economically, politically, militarily). And it is interesting—even fascinating. But it is also the right thing to do, for two reasons. First, because acting on the basis of ignorance—when that ignorance is avoidable—is morally wrong.

And harming our students, our children, is not only regrettable, disadvantageous, even stupid; it is reprehensible. By choosing for them greater social studies ignorance, we commit them to future problems we cannot even imagine. We harm them in ways that are beyond our resources to repair.

Seven Reasons Our *Students* Need the Full Four Social Studies Credits—or More

6. As mentioned, Hawai`i is one of the most diverse cultures in the United States. Helping our students understand that is a challenge—but also one of the greatest gifts we can give them. And a second great gift is to make sure they learn how to share their growing knowledge and perspective with their fellow citizens and friends. Both these gifts are strengths of our state’s *current* social studies program, as evidenced by our participation in History Day and National History Day (through the Hawai`i Council for the Humanities), Kids Voting Hawai`i, We the People, etc.

We ought to do everything we can to expand these dynamic programs so as to include as many students as possible—and from as many different segments of Hawai`i as possible.

7. Social studies—including philosophy, history, government—are crucial components of liberal education. This means an education designed for people who are supposed to—entitled to but also with a moral obligation to—take an active part in their own governing. People living in a democracy.

That’s us, folks. That’s our children, our students.

People today often think that a liberal education is one that’s designed to make students political “liberals.” Nothing could be further from the truth. Both meanings of the word “liberal” come from the Latin word *liber*, meaning “free.” (There’s another Latin word *liber*, meaning “book,” that is the source of our words “library.”) “Liberals,” as we call them, are people who are too “free” with their (or our!) money; it’s related to the old moral term “liberality,” a shade of generosity.

But a liberal education is one designed, literally, for a *free* man—in old Greek and Roman terms. These were the terms our Founding Fathers thought in. For them, a *liber* was a person who was entitled to take part in his government. That meant any person who was not a slave. Such a person deserved—indeed needed—a liberal education—and his society needed him to have the knowledge and understanding a *liberal* education gave. (The ancient—and colonial—*liberi* (the plural) were all men, and all white. But at least grammatically, if not at that time politically, the masculine form of a word could apply to women either in mixed groups or in cases when the gender was unknown to the speaker.)

If you didn't know this until now, don't feel bad—you're not alone. In spite of a Latin education in high school, a liberal education, and a doctoral degree in philosophy, I myself didn't understand the significance of *liber* "free" to a liberal education until I started to work with historians at the Folger Library's Institute for the History of Political Thought—after graduate school. Why don't we *all* know this? It's part of our heritage from our Founding Fathers.

8. But in spite of Hawai'i's long history of people of all nationalities working—and playing—together, we still have crimes that—reports make clear—are triggered either by cross-cultural misunderstanding or by the kind of emotions—fear, anger and mistrust—that come from being automatically threatened by people who are different than you—from being unable to read their signals accurately or counter aggressive or fearful signals effectively, from being too frightened to search out some common ground, or even to walk away.

Follow-up articles, sometimes months later, after cases have gone to trial, reveal sometimes horrifying back-stories of misunderstandings that escalated until someone was dead, and someone else headed for the judicial system.

And there are countless other incidents that are unfortunate—and avoidable—even though they don't result in crime.

And we are losing far too many children to drugs and violence. Teaching them how to belong to their society—which depends upon understanding it—is crucial to helping them become engaged.

9. Knowledge of other cultures leads to knowledge of oneself, which is intrinsically valuable—and can save you time, money, and heartache as well. Socrates (through his student Plato) put it more strongly, "The unexamined life is not worth living." But knowledge of other cultures is not the only means by which social studies education in Hawai'i teaches self-knowledge. In Hawai'i, social studies includes psychology, women's and gender studies, economics, critical thinking—all fields that contribute to self-knowledge.

And of course there is no more critical time for self-knowledge than the late-teen and early adult years. (Well, yes, there is: when you're going through a divorce. When you're elderly or terminally ill and know you're dying. But you get my point about the kids.)

10. Knowledge of other cultures also leads to knowledge of one's own community of identity. I have often taught classes that seem to students excitingly exotic—Japanese Art History, Asian Philosophy, Contemporary Asian Craft, Religious Values in East Asian Art, Gardens and Sacred Space in Asia. What surprises them—and me, at least until this came to be routine—is that learning about these exotic cultures teaches them ways of understanding their own families and cultures.

11. Our need to meet these challenges means our *students* need to be prepared to prepare to meet these challenges. And that includes working with other cultures. Our students will not be able to solve the problems they pose us alone, any more than we are. We need to understand the others whom we encounter—and ideally, to understand how they see us, so we can communicate what we want to and not just what they happen to hear. We need to be able to work together to solve these large-scale problems. Cooperation and negotiation are crucial. Successful cooperation and negotiation depend upon knowledge of others.

12. Finally, our students are asking us to. Students don't always know what courses are best for them—leadership by knowledgeable adults may be required to steer them into social studies courses. But in Hawai`i, students have submitted testimony to the Board of Education requesting current requirements be retained, and have appeared on KHON television (through Aloha POSSE's press conference) and then on the Aloha POSSE Facebook page asking our Board of Education not to change the requirements—telling us the adults are supposed to show leadership.

As Hawai`i has seen again and again the past few months, the world becomes increasingly interconnected. The effects of industrial (or military) radiation and ocean and air pollution, of exploration and use of ocean resources—and now, of information technologies and communication—are inescapable. The next few months will bring APEC, an additional fifty thousand visitors from Shanghai whom no one could have expected a year ago, and the beginnings (we hope) of preliminary discussions both about a new presidential library here and about Japanese discoveries of rare earth metals in water that is disconcertingly close to us. We can no longer separate ourselves from the rest of the world even if we want to; no place can. Our students need to be prepared to prepare to meet these challenges.

Hawai`i is already a national—and even international—leader in cross-cultural living and knowledge. For our own and our students' sakes, we should capitalize on our experience, our position, and our expertise—even, perhaps, for the sake of the rest of the world. We should do this for our survival, our happiness, our health, our prosperity, the pleasures of doing it, and because it is right.

Mara Miller, Ph.D.
Consultant & Independent Scholar
Philosophy, Art History, & Asian Studies

<http://www.maramiller.info>
2452 Tusitala St., Apt. 1106
Honolulu, HI 96815
(808) 354-1737

AlohaPOSSE: www.alohaposse.org

From: Christina Shaffer/KALAHEOH/HIDOE
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

I would like to offer testimony in FAVOR OF KEEPING THE SOCIAL STUDIES CREDIT AT FOUR.

Social studies is an integral part of making good citizens. Not only for them to understand what went on before, but also how they can affect change within our government and communities. Electives such as psychology, economics and current issues help students gain a better understanding of our society and their role within it. I think it would be shortsighted to have seniors have an extra elective available to them in their senior year. As it is, I have seniors who are taking quite a few electives and very few core academic classes.

Students also gain an insight into current news events as well as economics. Our economics can cover macro as well as micro--an important bit of knowledge for students trying to figure out credit score, credit cars, and how to take out loans to purchase a car or a home. We must be careful to not keep trying to suit our curriculum to the test. **There is something to be said for having well-rounded students who have an understanding of the world and societies around them.** Let's not short-change our students, let's give them the skills they need to be successful adults.

Mahalo,

Tina Shaffer
Kalaheo High School
Social Studies, English and Yearbook
254-7900 ext. 270

From: Wayne Feike/IAO/HIDOE
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Dear Chairman Horner and Members of the Board of Education,

Please **REJECT** the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 regarding the reduction of social studies requirements from 4 to 3 credits and the elimination of the Participation in a Democracy requirement. These requirements need to stay as they are.

I am dumbfounded as to why anyone would even consider such a change at a time in our history when knowledge of our political, social and economic system is so critical to finding effective solutions to the many problems our state and nation currently face. It is essential that we understand the basics of how our government functions so that we can be active participants in the political system. We must learn as much about how our economy works as possible so we can achieve financial success in our communities. We need to learn our history in order to reflect on our mistakes and celebrate our triumphs. Knowing this basic knowledge helps us to grow as a country. Our founders emphasized the importance of an educated citizenry to the success of our free society. Social studies is the means to realize that goal.

Thanks for considering my testimony and please vote to **REJECT** the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540.

Mahalo,

Wayne Feike
Social Studies Dept.
Iao School

From: "Natasha Chappel" <hs@paachawaii.org>

To: <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

I am writing to **REJECT** the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 regarding the reduction of social studies credits from 4 to 3 and the elimination of Participation in a Democracy as a required social studies course. I am **IN FAVOR** of **KEEPING** Social Studies requirements as they currently stand.

In my 12 years in education, I have seen hundreds of students discover their passions and find themselves interested in things they had never even heard of before: from food security, to APEC, economic globalization, and microfinance. I have encouraged students to learn about these kinds of global issues and have seen the proverbial light bulb go off many times. I've seen college majors and career goals change after their initial exposure. I've seen their motivation level and sense of purpose shoot up, and I've seen their sense of empowerment grow as they feel like a player who can make a difference in the global community. I've noticed that students often need encouragement to take on something new. They sometimes don't know what they like and don't like. Without a social studies requirement, many of them will not choose an elective like global studies, or they will opt to take classes that they perceive as "easy," especially those in their senior year, or final semester of school.

In particular, I also oppose the motion to eliminate Participation in Democracy in the schools. This will result in a loss to our community, and a serious blow to our democracy if we graduate the next generation without civic education. If students do not know how to participate in our democracy, we can expect that many will choose not to.

Thank you very much for considering my testimony in favor of **REJECTING** the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 and for **KEEPING** the social studies requirements as they currently stand.

Sincerely,

Natasha Chappel
Pacific and Asian Affairs Council
High School Program Director
1601 East-West Road, 4th Floor
Honolulu, HI 96848

(808) 944-7759
www.paachawaii.org

From: "roeleno@juno.com" <roeleno@juno.com>
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us
Cc: tsymons@hsta.org

Dear Chairperson Lupenui and members of the Student Achievement Committee:

My name is Romeo Eleno, and I've been teaching physical education for the past 17 years at Lana'i High & Elementary School. I am concerned with the BOE wanting to require less of our students when it comes to the importance of common core standards, democracy, and economics by reducing the credits of Social Studies. It will be difficult for the teachers in this critical area to teach the students in 3 years about America's past, present, and future especially with an uncertain economy that we are facing. Please do right thing and hold our students accountable for a good and rigorous education in our public schools.

Sincerely,
Romeo Eleno

From: Laurie Mazzoli <mazzoli@hawaii.rr.com>
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us
Cc: HSTA Chapter Kauai <hstakauai@gmail.com>

Testimony From - Laurie Mazzoli, Teacher of English at Kauai High School
Board of Education
Student Achievement Committee
Hearing Date - August 16, 2011 at 9:30 am
In reference to agenda item IV - Update/Discussion on the Status of
Board Policy 4540, "High School Graduation and Commencement Policy"

Ms. Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui, Committee Chairperson
Mr. Keith Amemiya, Committee Vice-Chairperson
Committee Members: Nancy Budd, Charlene Cuaresma, Angelica Wai
Sam Lao, Jim Williams

RE: Board Policy 4540 "High School Graduation and Commencement
Policy" with regards to reducing the Social Studies credit requirements
from 4 to 3.
Chairperson Lupenui and members of the Student Achievement
Committee:

I have spent 34 years in the teaching profession. I began at Millville Senior High School in New Jersey where I taught for 26 years, then moved to Kauai High School where I have spent the last five years, plus a two year stint in a private school on this island before that. It seems that the United States in general, and Hawaii specifically are straying far from the idea of no child left behind. My classes, consisting of over 150 9th grade English students, do not have books to take home, have to pass every class over the next four years in order to graduate with no wiggle room, and very few are proficient when they come to us from the Middle School. In New Jersey, the state test COUNTED: if you didn't pass, you did not graduate, but merely received a certificate of attendance. There is no reason for then to strive to achieve unless this drive comes from parents or from within. I have 35 textbooks, novels and books of poetry (one class set) in my room. Therefore, I am never able to send them home with reading material unless I run off copies which we have already been told to cut down on. How do you expect our students to learn without taking books home with them? You blame teachers for not doing their jobs, for whining because we are taking a cut in pay and paying out of pocket benefits, but where does your job come into play? Don't you feel some responsibility for the fact that the three high schools on Kauai have not passed the state standards? We are living in a nation that is on the brink of economic and educational ruin, and the Hawaii Board of Education is trying to cut the number of credits for graduates, graduates who need to know what civic-minded means. The Aloha and Ohana spirit must be spiraling somewhere over our heads, because it does not seem to be embracing the choices being made by the Hawaii DOE; instead, the Hawaii DOE is putting the students at Kauai High School behind the eight-ball. You want all students to go to college or be career ready, yet you do not have the wherewithal to move in an economically sound direction. I am ashamed to admit that I am working longer hours and receiving less pay. I am ashamed that the DOE continually touts that we, the teachers, are taking this punishment because we chose a profession where the child comes first. Here, the child does not come first. Here, the teacher falls to the bottom. Here, the children are being left behind at an alarming rate and no one seems to care.

Please, come into my classroom and observe the interaction between my students and me, not for an hour but for at least a week. Maybe then you will understand just how hard we work and how hard the students want to succeed! Please, come for a visit. I welcome you.

Sincerely,
Laurie Mazzoli
mazzoli@hawaii.rr.com

From: Eric Folk <efolk@hawaii.edu>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

To whom it concerns,

I am writing to **reject** the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 regarding the reduction of social studies credits from 4 to 3 and the elimination of Participation in a Democracy as a required social studies course. I am **in favor** of **keeping** Social Studies requirements as they currently stand.

The proposed reduction of our social studies requirements will put our students at a further disadvantage in both their educations and the development of their worldviews. Hawai'i is a wonderful place to be a child. However, the geographic isolation of the islands does our children no favors in either developing a global perspective, or in aiding them to learn about the rest of the world. If we truly want our students to be informed global citizens we need to emphasize, not cut, our social studies offerings. These are lessons and topics our children need to know! These are topics they are actually interested in and engaged by. Why would we reduce their exposure to this critical source of knowledge and educational inspiration?

Thank you very much for considering my testimony in favor of **rejecting** the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 and for **keeping** the social studies requirements as they currently stand.

Sincerely,

Eric Folk
University of Hawai'i

From: Anthony Russo <trusso@hawaii.rr.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Cc: tsymons@hsta.org

Testimony From: Lilian Yamasaki, Social Studies Teacher, McKinley High School

Board of Education
Student Achievement Committee
Ms. Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui, Committee Chairperson
Mr. Keith Amemiya, Committee Vice-Chairperson
Committee Members: Nancy Budd, Charlene Cuaresma, Angelica Wai Sam Lao, Jim Williams

RE: Board Policy 4540 "High School Graduation and Commencement Policy" with regards to reducing the Social Studies credit requirements from 4 to 3

Chairperson Lupenui and members of the Student Achievement Committee:

I am a Social Studies teacher at McKinley High School, currently teaching Participation in Democracy and the Modern History of Hawaii. I am writing because I am seriously concerned and befuddled by the intention of the Board to change the Social Studies credit requirement from 4 to 3 credits.

The Social Studies includes history, civics, economics, geography, anthropology, sociology, psychology, the humanities, global and regional studies and is an essential academic set of courses designed to prepare students to be local, national and global citizens. So it comes as a great surprise to me that efforts are being made to reduce the credit requirements for this discipline.

The Social Studies and their methodologies are critical to preparing

our students to become part of an informed populace, the foundation of this democracy.

I urge you to reconsider what I consider a dangerous path.

Sincerely,
Lilian Yamasaki

From: Jodi Maeda <jmaeda1227@yahoo.com>
To: "boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us" <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>
Cc: "tsymons@hsta.org" <tsymons@hsta.org>

Testimony From – Jodi Maeda, 7 year Math Teacher, Kauai High School
Board of Education
Student Achievement Committee
Hearing Date - August 16, 2011 at 9:30 am
In reference to agenda item IV - Update/Discussion on the Status of Board Policy
4540, "High School Graduation and Commencement Policy"

Ms. Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui, Committee Chairperson
Mr. Keith Amemiya, Committee Vice-Chairperson
Committee Members: Nancy Budd, Charlene Cuaresma, Angelica Wai Sam Lao,
Jim Williams

RE: Board Policy 4540 "High School Graduation and Commencement Policy"
with regards to reducing the Social Studies credit requirements from 4 to 3.

Chairperson Lupenui and members of the Student Achievement Committee:

My name is Jodi Maeda and I am a high school math teacher at Kauai High School. I believe that educating students to be civic-minded is extremely important, especially when we live in such a small community, such as Kua'i, or even within the state of Hawaii. Our students are very lucky to grow up in such a nurturing environment, where people are always willing to help each other out and take care of one another. However, the reality of the world we live in is so different. Students need to understand the world from a more global perspective. They need to know what else is out there, whether it be in the form of job opportunities, environmental crises, politics, or economics. We have the opportunity to educate our students about these issue through our social studies classes.

Reducing the required number of social studies credits to 3 instead of keeping it at the current 4 credit requirement, would indeed send the wrong message to students. We need them to understand the importance of being a citizen who cares and knows how to make a difference in the world. It would do a student no good to have passion for issues as an adult, but not understand the process by

which they can exercise their own democratic rights to advocate for those issues.

In addition to producing informed, educated citizens, keeping the social studies credit requirement at 4 would also better prepare students for college. For many students, the 4th credit of high school social studies is either psychology, sociology, and/or economics. These subjects are extremely important in understanding how the world works. These are also required courses of other college degree programs.

I am asking that you please consider our keiki in your decision. Please do not reduce the social studies credit requirement to 3!! Our keiki need to be educated and informed citizens who will know how to make a difference in our world. Thank you, for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,
Jodi Maeda
Lihue, Hawaii

From: thomas keelan <tvkeelan@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

TESTIMONY FROM: Thomas Vincent Keelan, Social Studies Department Head,
Honokaa High School

Board of Education
Student Achievement Committee

Hearing date; August 16, 2011 9:30 AM

In reference to Agenda Item IV - Update/Discussion on the status of the Board Policy #4540, "High School Graduation and Commencement Policy", reducing the Social Studies graduation credit requirements from 4 years to 3 years

Ms. Cheryl Ka'uhane, Committee Chairperson
Mr. Keith Amemiya, Committee Vice Chairperson
Committee Members: Nancy Budd, Charlene Cuaresma, Angelica Wai Sam Lao, Jim Williams

Chairperson Ka'uhane and members of the Committee:

When I learned of the proposed policy change for high school graduation requirements as it concerns Social Studies, and the reduction of 4 years to 3 years, I was extremely disappointed; disappointed that a board tasked to improve the learning of Hawaii's students would consider removing curriculum that I know assists Hawaii's youth

in being better people, better citizens, better learners, and better participants in our democratic society. Part of my teaching line provides me with the exciting opportunity to interact with seniors. This year I am teaching Economics and Political Science. Both of these subjects greatly assist the children who are about to enter the adult world.

In Economics the lessons and concepts our children acquire will be applied in a practical and pragmatic manner to their adult lives. I often tell my students, as I introduce my syllabus, that "this course will be one of the most useful courses you can take in high school". It provides me with a forum to share my 25+ years of business experience with my students. Prior to becoming a licensed teacher I have worked as a lender (7 1/2 years), Single Family appraiser (2 years), Commercial appraiser (1 1/2 years), and Vice President of a Commercial Real Estate firm in Silicon Valley (15+ years). My goal in coming to Hawaii was to utilize this knowledge to enrich the learning of business practices for Hawaii's youth. And now, you want to take that opportunity away from our children. I cannot begin to tell you how wrong that decision would be if you decided to take it.

In Political Science the students will be taught the concepts of advocacy, how to be an active citizen, how to get their voice heard, what a wonderful government system (flaws and all) that we have in this country. Why would you take that opportunity away from them? At a time when every dollar in the budget matters, don't you think it is appropriate for them to understand the decision process that affects their lives. Even though the Political Science class is scheduled to start in January 2012, I will be sharing this letter with my Econ class. It is my hope it proves that you will listen to cogent arguments. Please, please please do not make the decision to take away the learning moments curriculum like this provides to our students. It will be one of the worst you could make. Do what is pono and reaffirm that you the Board, and we the teachers care about Hawaii's youth.

Sincerely,

T. Vincent Keelan
Social Studies, Department Head
Honoka'a High

From: cheryl materne <lavasista@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

I apologize for sending both the web form and this email, but I was told to address each item, and the web form would not let me report on the second and third issue, it just kept giving me a survey.

I am not interested in a survey, just testimony.

I also support teacher evaluation based on our professional standards. NOT on test scores! Parents are by far much less involved in the education process, and that component of the students learning process should be given much more attention and weight when judging academic performance!! We have a RIGOROUS process that ALL licensed teachers go through. We also have more and more DATA and all that entails

being added to our shrinking time frames. Many teachers also have families, and while I LOVE teaching my students, I do not appreciate you folks using my love to diminish my own family time--- using the guise of " teachers didn't become teachers for money!!!" I took 7 professional tests to prove that I could be a good teacher in this state. I passed everyone of them and not on the low end of the scale. We all continue to be evaluated every 5 years by PepT and my administrators. We all continue to take professional development opportunities and keep detailed records of such.

The system keeps getting pulled further and further apart, and pieces keep getting taken off, and then with a manini time frame AND no time to prep (except for home, and forgive me this, but my personal life should not belong to the DOE!) We are expected to put together a curriculum -which we do- in that all students are expected to thrive???

Alone? Where is parent accountability?? Where is government support? Do you know that our students only have 15 minute recesses now. 15 minutes in one whole day....Seriously, something is wrong but it is not that the teachers cannot raise the SCORES... it is the inconsistent system that keeps getting switched around and devalued and deconstructed. Sadly, the BIGGEST losers here are our children!!!

Honestly, we know that you folks know this.

Please be professional and work with us. Your budget deficit does not belong to us alone.

Thank You,
Cheryl Materne

From: cheryl materne <lavasista@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

A car needs all of its fluids to run efficiently. I need all the components of my education in order to be an effective teacher, but we are being asked to take part of our students well rounded requirements away?? Social studies? Who decided that our history is not important???? That is who we are, where we came from, and where we are going....

We cannot deconstruct education and suck out all the different pieces. Kids need it all to thrive and grow. Music is already gone, now health, (you know, recess, and PE)

Come on, stop taking away from our children to put DATA in your computers. We are all liable. These kids are growing up and they will be the community that takes over from us. It will not be on my conscience that I supported taking away their curriculum.

From: Jared Kawatani <kawatanij2013@universitylaboratoryschool.org>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

I REJECT the CURRENT PROPOSAL to reduce the social studies credit from 4 to 3 and eliminate Participation in Democracy (Hawaii's civic education course). Social studies/civics helps me be a more productive citizen because we get to learn more about

the government and how it works and it helps us learn from mistakes made in the past. Also social studies helps us get ready for college and a career because we learn how to write research papers. Also we are the future and this will decrease chances for us. I hope you reject the current proposal.

Jared kawatani

From: sierra callihan <sierracallihan@hotmail.com>

To: <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

DIRECTED TO : BOE meeting on Tuesday, August 16 at 9:30 am

I am writing to REJECT the proposed changes to the BOE Policy 4540 regarding the reduction of social studies credits from four to three and the elimination of Participation in a Democracy as a required social studies course. I am IN FAVOR of KEEPING Social Studies requirements as they currently stand.

In the modern day era of increasing world competition and relations, one would clearly imagine that social studies, a course that studies history as well as Hawaii and America's importance to the world, is a significant topic of study that must not be faltered. However, the unfortunate debate of whether or not the four required credits of social studies for high school students should be lowered to three has arisen. As a student, I am strongly opposed to this notion due to the fact that I am aware of the pressing need for my generation to be aware of how the world functions, and how we arrived to our present state as a state, country, and nation. Over the past four years, the social studies courses that I have participated in have taught me to accept different values and viewpoints of various cultures, the importance of citizenship in the United States, how to be a critical thinker on a world wide level, and more. Each of my four credits, from World History to AP Government, have been significant in my growth as an American as well as a civil student.

In the modern day era of increasing world competition and relations, one would never question whether or not social studies is significant to students, the future of our country. Shall we help them to grow as world thinkers? Or increase the elective credits in which growth will be limited? The choice is up to our government, and us students must only hope that our future will be taken into consideration.

Thank you very much for considering my testimony in favor of REJECTING the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 and for KEEPING the social studies requirements as they currently stand.

Sincerely,

Sierra Callihan

Aiea High School student and Student Association's Vice President

From: "I" <dccbsc@aol.com>
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Dear BOE,

American students are horrible with their nations' history. They are also horrible in World history and now they are expected to get in the work force and engage in other businesses, and exchanges without an understanding or even knowing about anyone's past?

Our country and the countries of others are what they are because of their past. If our children do not know their past how can they build a future. Man kind's past is the foundation of the future. Yes, they need to know IT, they need to know all the new things that will make up their future but they need to know $1+1 = 2$ before they can know the $1 \times 1 = 1$ and even the square root of a number or, learn addition before learning algebra.

Look at the WHOLE PICTURE, not just the parts. Each part make up the WHOLE PICTURE. Do not lower the standards of our education our, nation because you are so short sighted. You need to look down the road to the future.

Colleen Ohira
2nd grade teacher

By the way, learning takes time and many, many times of reviews and revisiting information before it become focus in our brain. That is a fact for all learning to take place.

From: Brian Flatt <bflattman@hotmail.com>
To: <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

Hello BOE,

I am a concerned citizen. I am saddened to hear that you are seriously considering reducing the Social Studies graduation requirements from four credits to three. I am not sure what your reasoning is for doing so. Do you not think Social Studies is important?

I was a mediocre student when I was in high school, but Social Studies was something that got me up for school, got me excited about learning and truly made me the informed and involved citizen that I am today. Social Studies didn't just make me a more educated American, it made me a global citizen.

I am a caring and contributing member of society and I can honestly say that the Social Studies classes I took in high school played a big role in making who I am today.

Please reconsider your proposal to reduce the amount of Social Studies credits that our future leaders need to take to graduate.

Aloha,
Brian Flatt

From: John Kometani <jkometani@hawaiiantel.net>
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us
Cc: tsymons@hsta.org

Ms. Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui, Committee Chairperson
Mr. Keith Amemiya, Committee Vice-Chairperson
Committee Members: Nancy Budd, Charlene Cuaresma, Angelica Wai Sam Lao, Jim Williams

RE: Board Policy 4540 "High School Graduation and Commencement Policy" with regards to reducing the Social Studies credit requirements from 4 to 3.
Chairperson Ka'uhane Lupenui and members of the Student Achievement Committee:

My name is John Kometani, and I am a teacher at Kohala High school on the Big Island. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on the proposed amendment to the current High School Graduation and Commencement Policy, specifically the discussion to reduce the Social Studies requirement from four to three credits.

I do not support the proposed amendments to Board Policy 4540. The approval of the proposed amendments may lead to the loss of jobs for highly qualified social studies teachers. Additionally, the proposed increase of elective credits may lead to an influx of classes taught by noncertified teachers.

I believe that a student's educational experiences in Social Studies classes are critical components of becoming civic-minded citizens. Social Studies courses help to provide a foundation essential in preparing students to make informed decisions about their future and the world they live in.that a student's educational experiences in Social Studies classes are critical components of becoming civic-minded citizens. Social Studies courses help to provide a foundation essential in preparing students to make informed decisions about their futureand the world they live in.

I strongly support the Hawaii State Teachers Association belief that keeping the requirements of four credits to graduate and ask that you not take away a student's right to a well-rounded education. We believe premature passing and implementation of this policy could be detrimental to both students and teachers.

Thank you.
John Kometani
Kohala High School

From: Chris Falklove <falklove@gmail.com>
To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

As a seventh grade teacher I would not be impacted by changing the graduation requirement regarding social studies.

However, as a citizen I am deeply concerned with the impact that not requiring students to take social studies in high school will have on our society. Please do not eliminate the social studies requirement for graduation. No other course allows for and encourages the development of global understanding and local involvement within our society.

From: Corey Rosenlee <coreyrosenlee@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

This is for testimony for the general meeting of the BOE

My name is Corey Rosenlee and I am a social studies teacher at Campbell High. I am here today to ask the Board to consider the impact of reducing Social Studies credits on our average students.

One of the biggest arguments in reducing Social Studies is to give the students choice. It is true that our best students will still choose to take AP social studies classes. These students will also go onto college. But what about our students in the middle?

Unfortunately the average students will take the easier path. It's like peas or candy and many of the average students will choose candy if given a choice, that is, they will choose fun electives like weightlifting or dancing over another social studies class. But these are the students who will benefit from that additional social studies class the most. In order to achieve this goal sometimes you need to eat your peas.

Another argument is that other states don't require four years of social studies. Well again if you look at the trend dealing with average students, the movement is more social studies, not less. Schools like the groundbreaking KIPP schools and the Seed schools require four social studies credits. They know that their students need the solid core of academics. These schools have shown that having a more demanding schedule, instead of more fun electives, has amazing results of helping average students graduate and go on to colleges. With only 17% of Hawaii students finishing college we need to be more rigorous not less.

What further angers me is the proposal to eliminate Participation in Democracy as a requirement. This board was in part created because half of the electorate in some counties left the ballot blank when voting for the BOE. Hawaii's 18-25 year olds have the lowest turnout of any voters in the nation and now we want to cut the one class that teaches them how to be citizens of their country. As a social studies teacher I teach my students about elections, get them involved in their community and register and teach them to vote. Our voter participation is embarrassing and the last thing we want to do is to make it worse.

I had to take a personal day to be here, because I believe our students' future matters. I hope the Board will make the right decision to keep the current 4 social studies credits requirements to allow me and the other teachers to go back to helping our students.

From: Rough Rider <projectcitizensk@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Dear Chairman Horner and Members of the Board of Education.

I am writing to REJECT the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 regarding the reduction of social studies credits from 4 to 3 and the elimination of Participation in a Democracy as a required social studies course. I am IN FAVOR of KEEPING Social Studies requirements as they currently stand.

Courses such as Participation in Democracy, psychology, sociology, economics, ethnic studies, and Hawaiian studies constantly teach skills like critical thinking, evaluating sources of information, tolerance for differing viewpoints, are positively tied to a higher voter turnout among young adults (verified by several major studies), active citizenry, and are tied to specific skills like financial literacy, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and modern computer map making technologies. They are critical in supporting the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts, and are essential in making sure students are both College and Career Ready.

In my Participation in Democracy class, my students are taught not only the organization and function of government, but, more importantly, what the role of government is in their daily lives and vice versa.

They also learn that they do have rights, thereby, making the Constitution and the Bill of Rights come alive. By realizing how a leader's sense of ethics and responsibility does indeed affect their lives, the students become serious and enthusiastic about their right and future opportunity to vote, to have a say in government that they never thought they could have.

The students also do Project Citizen that requires them to cite a social, political, or economic issue and create a policy to address that issue. Then they devise an action plan to carry out their policy. The students then invite those who might support their policy to come to Roosevelt for their presentation of their issue, policy, and action plan. A PowerPoint or 3-panel poster accompanies the presentation as each student shares why their group's policy is relevant and deserves consideration and support.

In the past, we have had in our audience legislators, city council members, heads of state departments, Board of Education staff, former State Superintendent Pat Hamamoto, teachers and vice-principals of Roosevelt High School, members of community and non-profit organizations, University of Hawai'i at Manoa professors and staff, and even a Hawai'i state supreme court justice. In spring 2008, before the Board of Education, my PID students advocated to make community service mandatory for high school graduation. Even before that, as early as 2004 when I was at Kaimuki High School, my students advocated for better bathroom conditions and, lo and behold, two of Kaimuki High School's bathrooms were renovated the next year. The story appeared in the Honolulu Advertiser on June 2, 2004

(<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2004/Jun/07/ln/ln03a.html>).

The successes of Project Citizen, of Participation in Democracy go on and on. When the students wanted to turn Roosevelt into a Green School, they mathematically computed how much money and energy would be saved if we just lessened lighting in each of the classrooms by 40%. Another group spoke up for a mentorship program for newcomers and, currently, Roosevelt has such a program for the freshmen. Last year, one class pushed for the revival of a school spirit club and now we have one.

One group of students wanted photovoltaic heating at Roosevelt to save energy, but the costs were high. However, these students did such a fine job in research, contacting people, even going to the Capitol to hold signs and advocate for photovoltaic energy, and giving a thorough, remarkable presentation that the alumni offered to pay for it.

In their evaluations, the students have many positive comments regarding their experience in PID.

Many say how Project Citizen and the PID course helped them to understand advocacy, government, and civil rights and how citizenship works. It inspired even some to seek political office to make a difference and, to one student, it inspired him to learn. Period. Two years ago, this particular student, whose group supported civil unions, said he was prejudiced against gays until he did the project and studied about personal rights. He was so enthusiastic, not only about civil unions, but about learning itself. His newly found spark uplifted me because this certain student was not only special needs, but one of the most apathetic learners I'd ever come across.

Participation in Democracy, therefore, is invaluable to our students. It reinforces critical thinking, creativity, exploration, and using one's voice. It certainly covers all General Learner Outcomes, readies our graduates for the adult world, academic and otherwise, and meets the Board of Education's Strategic Plan: assure all students graduate college- and career-ready through effective use of standards-based education; ensure and sustain a rich environment and culture for life-long learners; and continuously improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness of the educational system. To eliminate it from the high school required curriculum would be a grievous, irresponsible act that would certainly prove detrimental to the very ones whose opinions and actions will determine our fate. By the time they are in high school, our youth are a step away from the adult world. If they are ignorant of government, the laws of the land, civil rights, and advocacy, they will fall short of being educated, productive citizens. How can we expect our local youth to compete in the bigger world? They will enter the higher education institutions that expect the students to already have knowledge of civics, economics, psychology, sociology, and cultural studies. If they have not the background of any of these disciplines, they will struggle and even be overwhelmed as their colleagues who do have the knowledge learn with confidence and assurance.

As a teacher, I see first-hand how students' desire to learn is enhanced and inspired by Participation in Democracy, economics, psychology, sociology, and cultural studies. History helps the students to learn about the past and the present. P.I.D. and the senior social studies courses allow the students to apply the content and relate it DIRECTLY to their lives, thus, making education relevant and exciting. These courses put the finishing touches on our kids who have been in school twelve years of their lives. It sends them off with a toolkit for survival, for a better understanding of themselves and the world they will live in, and, if they are not satisfied with this world, how they, as citizens, can make it better.

Please reconsider the changes to BOE policy 4540. I am a teacher. I work with high school social studies students ten months a year. I know how they think. I know how they make their choices. To NOT make Participation in Democracy and senior social studies requirements will allow the juniors and seniors, who already are looking at the light at the end of the tunnel, to take courses that will NOT directly enhance their lives as responsible, capable everyday citizens. They NEED civics. They NEED sociology, psychology, economics, and cultural studies. The knowledge they receive will enable them to work constructively within the confines of our society, our democracy. How sad, albeit dangerous, it will be to have one generation who does not know how to think, how to reason, how to act appropriately, all because there were no educational opportunities to learn these life skills.

Thank you very much for considering my testimony in favor of REJECTING the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 and for KEEPING the social studies requirements as they currently stand.

Sincerely,

Soozi Kawakami

Teacher

Modern Hawaiian History/ Participation in Democracy

Roosevelt High School

Honolulu, Hawai'i

From: L Chincio <mrschincio@hotmail.com>

To: <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

To Whom It May Concern:

Please do not lower social studies requirements. We are committed to providing a quality education to the students of Hawaii and lowering expectations will not help prepare our students for higher education and a better life.

Please work with the HSTA to create a fair system for evaluating teachers.

Thank you,
Lyn Chincio
Helemano Elementary School

From: Kona <konadays@yahoo.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

I am a High School Counselor and I do not support the proposed amendments to Board Policy 4540. To eliminate the requirements for 4 years of Social Studies classes will lead to a lack of politically aware or civics aware citizens and students. There are already enough ignorant people walking the face of the earth without working towards the BOE/DOE putting concentrated effort into creating more of them. UH Manoa and UH Hilo require 4 years of Social Studies for entrance requirements as do countless mainland Universities and Colleges, and so am I to understand that the BOE/DOE is working

towards having the high school students in Hawaii graduate a Hawaii High School and not even meet the entrance requirements of the Hawaii University !!!!!

The DOE/BOE raised the credit requirement from 22 credits to 24 credits and now wants to start eliminating core subject courses. This defies logic, This makes me seriously question the intelligence involved in this Board Policy. This makes me as a citizen and tax payer seriously question how or why we are paying those who came up with this idea that is counterproductive to our students. **WHAT ARE YOU PEOPLE THINKING?** Someone bought you books, sent you to school, theoretically educated you and your grey matter was wasted coming up with this drivel !!! This instead of decisions to increase the required number of years of Math from 3 to 4. This instead of increasing the required number of years of Physical Education from 1 to 2 because there are so many obese people in Hawaii. **WHAT ARE YOU PEOPLE THINKING???????**

It would be prudent for you genius people on the BOE to understand that you are taking away education that Hawaii students need to get into colleges and universities. These are the same colleges and universities that today 1 of every 10 applicants are coming from China, and 50% of those Chinese students have 800 scores across the board on the SAT Tests. So while you self proclaimed GURU"S are ironically working on taking away academic subjects from Hawaii High School students in order to essentially make them less intelligent and competitive for College Entrance. The Chinese are obviously working twice as hard to make their students **MORE** intelligent and more competitive for College Entrance. It doesn't take a Rocket Scientist to figure out if a Hawaiian Student or a Chinese Student is going to be entering the colleges and universities in the United States in the future. It also does not take a Rocket Scientist to figure out which Board of Education is more educated, more intelligent, and working more on behalf of its student population the Hawaiian or the Chinese. Whoever came up with this preposterous idea and policy and everyone who supported it should either be fired or should resign immediatly for undermining Hawaii students education and for being grossly negligent in their appointed responsibilities. This is a classical example of mistaking activity for accomplishment !!!!!

In the words of **Albert Einstein**: Only two things are infinite, the universe and human **stupidity**, and I'm not sure about the former.

From: Sheala Karratti-Humphries <shealakh@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

As a student of the Arts and Humanities, I see first-hand how often it is the last to be funded, but the first to have faculty cut and courses taken away from. For a student in the Arts and Humanities, this can be very discouraging, not only because your school or university lacks the resources to provide you with the courses you need, or because it

takes jobs away from teachers teaching subjects like social studies, English, or philosophy, but also because it shows how unimportant the Arts and Humanities are to society. No one area of study should be more important than the other, to be proper citizens of this nation and of this world, we must be knowledgeable in all areas of study; we must have a solid foundation. A person can be a great mathematician but not know how to communicate effectively, and vice versa, an English major can be excellent at writing, but not know how to problem solve. School is where we begin to build our foundation on which we build our careers and future on. High school, most importantly is where a child begins to become a citizen, where children begin to realize their potential as an intelligent being moving throughout the world. Teachers, coaches, and principals all help to form and shape these foundations. On the other hand, high school is also a place to socialize and make new friends, which is why I believe that allowing for seven electives at the cost of a social studies credit, is completely absurd. Absurd not because I don't believe in allowing students to think for themselves and choose courses they're interested in, but because I know that more than half of students won't choose electives for the right reasons. Most will choose what classes their friends will take or whatever class seems easiest to get a good grade in. Students will not be able to branch out through other areas of study effectively. This is why we need a firm set of credits and courses at the high school level. Students have college to decide and explore what they would like to do, high school is what gives them an array of education to choose from. Hawaii has always been towards the bottom in education, let's not sink lower.

-Sheala Karratti-Humphries

Honolulu, HI

From: Melissa Beavers <mmbeavers@hawaiiintel.net>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us



Testimony 081611 BOE General Business

Meeting.docx

Attached please find testimony that I would like to submit for the BOE General Business Meeting scheduled for August 16, 2011 at 1:30 p.m.

Mahalo,
Melissa Beavers

From: "Wong, Pam CIV CNRH, N5" <pam.wong@navy.mil>

To: <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

Dear Chairman Horner and Members of the Board of Education.

I am writing to urge you to REJECT the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 regarding the reduction of social studies credits from 4 to 3 and the elimination of Participation in a Democracy as a required social studies course. I am IN FAVOR of KEEPING Social Studies requirements as they currently stand.

The Social Studies in its current curriculum requirement and format is a critical foundational elements for our graduating high school students as it introduces and cultivates an awareness of civic responsibility to community, state and nation.

Sincerely,

Pam Wong
Navy Region Hawaii, N5 Office
Strategy and Future Requirements
tel: 808.473.3598
<mailto:pam.wong@navy.mil>

From: John Orr <orre001@hawaii.rr.com>

To: "boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us" <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

Well let me see, I think social studies is one of the most important subjects people need when they grow up so they understand things like constitutions, laws and how our system works. Please make sure our children get 4 years not just 3.

Sincerely, Eve Orr, dedicated teacher

From: Debbie Anderson <debbievida@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

I'm sending in two testimonies, one of which I'd been crafting for over a week.

I used Survey Monkey, but it only allows submittal to ONE committee, and not two when it's a joint meeting. Also, it's not allowing me to submit the second testimony. Then, I e-mailed from LN twice, but couldn't attach. Now I'm sending to you at least one of the letters, the other when it's complete. Perhaps, I'll try to fax from my new school before 8 also, partially as my first try to learn their system. Better to blanket than not have it get there.

Mahalo for understanding these difficulties and apologies for any repetition.

Debbie

Board of Education (BOE) Testimony
Student Achievement Committee
August 16, 2011

Ms. Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui, Committee Chairperson

Mr. Keith Amemiya, Committee Vice-Chairperson

Committee Members: Nancy Budd, Charlene Cuaresma, Angelica Wai Sam Lao,
Jim

Williams

RE: Board Policy 4540 "High School Graduation and Commencement Policy" with regards to removing the Senior Project credit requirement.

Chairperson Ka'uhane Lupenui and members of the Student Achievement Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on the proposed amendment to the current High School Graduation and Commencement Policy, specifically the discussion to reduce the Social Studies requirement from four to three credits.

The Chairs of the BOE Ad-Hoc Committee on the Senior Project do not support the proposed amendment to Board Policy 4540 which would downgrade the DOE's Race to the Top/ Strategic Plan from requiring a Senior Project of all diploma graduates. We believe that a Capstone or Senior Project should be a diploma graduation requirement because it is the culmination of the K-12 curriculum.

We request that this consideration be postponed until the topic of Senior Project could be examined fully by the Board. Extensive documentation is available from long-term Senior Projects like Molokai and an newer quality programs such as Mililani High. We hope that a fair effort be made to hear of our current progress prior to what will essentially dismantle our primary focus point: building toward a statewide Senior Project graduation requirement. At minimum, we recommend that every BOE member participate in a Senior Project panel at a neighborhood school prior to deciding to remove

this as a graduation requirement. We hope that as in past years, Board members would attend a Senior Project event such as those convened by Dr. Gerry Madrazo.

Our rationale stems back to the National Commission on the High School Senior Year's 2001 report: *No High School Senior Left Behind.pdf* <http://www.woodrow.org/images/pdf/policy/raising_our_sights.pdf>. Rather than relying solely "seat time," standards-based education has attempted to move towards demonstrable skills.

We have heard that the elected BOE wants to have only one diploma. Retaining only a minimum diploma removes an incentive for higher accomplishment. In addition, by federal law, already there must be a diploma alternative, the Certificate of Completion. Please note that a Senior Project's learning stretch can be adapted to match the capability of all diploma and almost all certificate graduates, which makes it a better alternative measure than an exit exam.

The BOE proposal seems to maintain a requirement for a Personal Transition Plan (PTP), which is a loosely defined tool. The PTP "portfolio" process feeds into a Senior Project portfolio, which is developed with a much more clearly defined and more rigorous process. We believe that the Senior Project provides for demonstrating all six General Learner Outcomes (GLOs) in a self-determined process which aligns to both College and Career readiness. If only one of these two tools is retained for all diplomas, we posit that rather than the PTP, it should be the Senior Project.

To strengthen support of Hawaii's Senior Project, on our behalf in 2010 the Hawaii Association of School Librarians (HASL) submitted a Statement of Concern to the American Association of School Librarians (AASL). June 2011 in New Orleans, the AASL Affiliate Assembly formed a National Task Force on Capstone Projects. Momentum is growing nationwide. We are concerned that Hawaii not be left behind.

We hope this will develop into a Joint attempt with the American College and Research Libraries (ACRL). In the meantime, we will continue to work on this PK-20 college and career readiness initiative with our partners within the University of Hawaii system, such as the ongoing Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) National Leadership Grant: Pathways to Excellence and Achievement in Research and Learning (PEARL) project, etc.

We have tried to limit this brief appeal to a request for postponement of your decision-making process. We have much more to share, and hope we will be provided a much more reasonable timeframe and venue in which to do so.

Again, mahalo for your kind attention and consideration,
BOE Senior Project Committee, Co-chair

From: Prema Cordeiro <prema@ncss.org>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Dear Hawaii State Board of Education,

Please find enclosed a letter from the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS).

Thank you,
Prema Cordeiro

--

Prema Cordeiro
Program Manager, External Relations & Council Communications
National Council for the Social Studies
8555 Sixteenth Street, Suite 500
Silver Spring, MD 20910

pcordeiro@ncss.org

voice: 301.588.1800 ext. 106

fax: 301.588.2049

www.socialstudies.org

From: Mara Miller <maramiller3@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

This is in addition to my earlier submission.

My Oral Testimony to BOE

These comments do not repeat testimony I sent you (& published in *The Hawaii Independent*) regarding the 12 reasons we must protect our *current* Social Studies requirements.

I have 5 brief things to say to you today. The first one I don't want to publish, because it might hurt people, or cause shame or anger or intimidation.

1. [intentionally omitted.]

2. 2nd, Why would you or anyone want to exclude anyone? There are various reasons, but one set is tied to the deepest meanings of liberal education.

The aims of liberal education have for *1500 years* been defined as preparing citizens to participate in democracy—teaching them to do so. But it also means becoming the kind of person who *should* participate: ethical, well-read, understanding of many viewpoints, self-aware and self-critical, good at critical thinking—the kind of person the rest of us *want* to have participating. One common term for this is **Self-cultivation**—the qualities within oneself that make life worth living, and make others want you

around. This is a crucial part of liberal education and social studies education.

3. HI is insular—not only geographically isolated, but in terms of attitudes and knowledge bases. Every story turns into how it affects HI.

True pride in being Hawaiian, or in being from HI, does not mean just telling everybody (or even thinking to ourselves) “We’re the best!” It’s not boosterism.

And it should not mean we cannot care about or understand anything that is not directly connected to us in HI (as it seems to from TV newscasts.)

This insularity harms HI. If we want to combat that, we must educate. And we must combat this if we really want to succeed in the new century—given the problems we all have.

But this insularity is hard to combat outside of Social Studies education. Even the new ICTs (Information & Communications Technologies) and social networking do NOT automatically provide intelligent empathetic access to & communication with outsiders—unless people have been taught not to be afraid, intimidated, & made comfortable with difference from themselves..

4. My 4th point is, Re: following other states: HI should lead, not follow.

The commitment to public education can never equate simply to doing what everyone else does. It must mean doing the best we possibly can for our students, our state, and our society.

This does not mean, of course, that we don’t ever follow their lead, especially in cases where there’s a developing trend toward improvement, such as the current trend to strengthen Social Studies requirements.

But following others' lead is not *justifiable* unless we can demonstrate both:

- a. their superior knowledge, skill, wisdom or moral position
- b. *AND* the fact that we are incapable of or unsuited to devising our own path.

And other states are not analogous to HI—not their situations, their histories, their populations, problems, available solutions and resources, etc.

Other states may not be coming from a good position—they may be trying to squelch some populations; may not have our wealth of cultural & intellectual resources to draw from, may be thinking in out-dated paradigms that don't fit 21st century, etc.

We don't want to reinvent the wheel, or as historian Mark Ravina puts it, "reinvent the square wheel."

5. Finally, becoming excellent takes time: 10,000 hours, to be exact (Malcolm Gladwell; countless social science studies). We need our citizens to start early.

Please amend your proposed changes to Policy 4540 to keep Social Studies Education intact.

From: Kellie Iwasaki <kkiwasaki@hotmail.com>

To: <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

August 14, 2011

Dear Board of Education,

I am writing to reject the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 regarding the reduction of social studies credits from 4 to 3 and the elimination of Participation in a Democracy

as a required social studies course. I am in favor of keeping Social Studies requirements as they currently stand.

As a result of expanding economies and advanced technologies, the world is shrinking and converging. This act is already being played out on the global stage and Social studies and civics is important to me because I am eager and ready to take a deep breath and step out positively onto that stage and join the play.

Social studies classes in intermediate and high school have helped me become more independent, open minded and to take great interest in different cultures, people and issues. It has helped me to embrace my own cultural heritage, inspired me to learn another language and take interest in the world around me. I have hosted students from Alaska and Japan and I have gone on exchange programs to Vietnam and Japan. I enjoy sharing our special Hawaii Island and our culture as a “host” and I learned so much about Vietnam and Japan as a “guest.” Interacting with the students helped me see them change and expand their preconceived images of “Americans” and vice versa. I have learned that we are more similar than different; our concerns, our interests and our hearts are the same – we are one people living on one world.

All of the opportunities that I have had both in social studies classes and in my community have helped me gain, improve and exercise leadership skills, take initiative, and acquire a positive, team player attitude. It has helped me develop a global perspective by seeing my participatory role on my island, in my state, the nation and the world. We would be taking a backward step for Hawaii's students and the community if social studies credits were reduced and civic education was eliminated as a requirement.

Thank you very much for considering my testimony in favor of rejecting the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 and for keeping the social studies requirements as they currently stand.

Sincerely,
Kellie Iwasaki
Junior
Waiakea High School
155 W. Kawili Street
Hilo, HI 96720

232 Edita Street
Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 987-4931

From: rollinlarge64@aol.com

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

**Board of Education Testimony
Student Achievement Committee
August 16, 2011**

Ms. Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui, Committee Chairperson
Mr. Keith Amemiya, Committee Vice-Chairperson
Committee Members: Nancy Budd, Charlene Cuaresma, Angelica Wai Sam
Lao, Jim
Williams

RE: Board Policy 4540 “High School Graduation and Commencement Policy” with regards to reducing the Social Studies credit requirements from 4 to 3.

Chairperson Ka'uhane Lupenui and members of the Student Achievement Committee:

My name is James Vita and I am an 8th grade social studies teacher at Waiakea Intermediate School on the Big Island. I am a bit upset by this proposed amendment. The students get little enough time to learn social studies in elementary school because they spend most of their time concentrating on math and Language Arts. Their first real introduction to social studies as a regular class often comes in middle school.

History is an important subject. By learning history, the students can look at the reasons things are the way they are today. They learn where our country came from, and where they, themselves, came from. They see how the problems we face today came about, and that those problems didn't just randomly occur. Social studies also gives students the opportunity to use skills learned in Language Arts to complete reading and writing assignments, thereby reinforcing those skills.

HSA stresses the importance of Language Arts and Math, and I don't have a problem with that. But there is more to school and learning than just those two subjects. Social Studies teaches students about the world around them, how it got to be the way it is, and how different cultures interact with each other. This is especially important today as the world gets increasingly smaller. We have a world community and a world economy, and understanding how it works and how it came about is becoming more important every year. Social Studies teaches students all of this and more.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to give testimony on this proposed amendment.

James Vita
Social Studies Teacher
Waiakea Intermediate School

From: Gabriella Gualano <gualanog2012@universitylaboratoryschool.org>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Aloha,

On behalf of the PAAC club and students across America, I strongly reject the current proposal to reduce social studies credit from 4 to 3 and eliminate Participation in Democracy which will be discussed in a testimony on Tuesday, August 16 at 9:30 am. I am in favor of keeping social studies requirements as they currently stand.

Social Studies and civics is an essential subject that I feel all students should take because it teaches us about history and our future. Learning about different cultures and events that helped shape our nation today is significant in molding our tomorrow. By taking a look at history through our textbooks, daily current events, and through radio and television broadcasts, we are helping our generation realize their roles in shaping a well-functioning and cooperative community.

Today in society, many teenagers and adults are ignorant of our roots and unaware of current issues. Social Studies and Participation in Democracy is a vital environment to expose ourselves to our past and be able to connect history to our present and future. By cutting social studies credit from 4 to 3 and eliminating Participation in Democracy, we are putting ourselves at a disadvantage and our nation's future on the line.

Thank you very much for considering my testimony in favor of REJECTING the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 and for KEEPING the social studies requirements as they currently stand.

Sincerely,

University Laboratory School PAAC Team

Heidi Cortez, Matthew Ganibi, Jared Kawatani, Macy Yue, Carley Kida, Gabriella Gualano

From: Don Long <mrdonlong@yahoo.com>

To: "tsymons@hsta.org" <tsymons@hsta.org>, "boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us" <boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us>

A clear and balanced idea of social development is a part of a balanced and productive member of society. Although isolated by thousands of ocean miles we have access to

vast resources of information about the world we live in. Students can use resources like the internet to find answers to their questions, but it is imperative our students are guided by a living classroom teacher to insure that the resources they use are valid and represent the truth and not biased. We are constantly bombarded with skewed information designed to sway ideas, values, and traditions of our culture and community. We must insure that our students learn what is true and real and make wise decisions based on valid information. Our cultural, and social values are who we are! Keep social studies as a requirement for high school graduation. Keep our trained social studies teachers available to insure students in Hawaii learn and understand our past to make wise decisions for their future. Social Studies classes are vital to insure that Hawaii's students can actively participate in the global society.

Aloha nui loa from Kauai..Don Long

From: Marissa Okazaki <okazaki.marissa@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Argument Against Policy 4540

Good morning, my name is Marissa Okazaki and I am testifying to reject the proposed changes to the BOE Policy 4540. I have recently graduated from Mililani High School and through my four years of social studies, I have developed an expanded worldview and learned more about my responsibility as a citizen. In my humble opinion, social studies is the *most* important subject because it builds civil competence and teaches us lessons from the past so that we can address issues in the present. Now the diversity of Hawaii also encourages and teaches students tolerance for other viewpoints; a characteristic necessary for this rapidly globalizing world. Humans are naturally social creatures and by teaching them to be sensitive and aware of other genders, races, classes, religions, and cultures, we can learn to interact in a civil way. Personally, the most important lesson I've learned from social studies is to *listen*. After reflecting on the recent debt crisis, I felt that the greatest issue facing the Democrats and the Republicans were their inability to *truly* listen to one another. Now sure, both parties may have heard the other but they lacked the consideration for that other viewpoint. With that in mind, do we really want our next generation of students to be unable to listen and tolerate? I ask you today to

consider my testimony and reject the proposed changes to the BOE policy 4540 and keep our four years of social studies. Thank-you.

From: Marissa Okazaki <okazaki.marissa@gmail.com>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

For the 9:30 session.

On Mon, Aug 15, 2011 at 12:16 PM, Marissa Okazaki <okazaki.marissa@gmail.com> wrote:

Argument Against Policy 4540

Good morning, my name is Marissa Okazaki and I am testifying to reject the proposed changes to the BOE Policy 4540. I have recently graduated from Mililani High School and through my four years of social studies, I have developed an expanded worldview and learned more about my responsibility as a citizen. In my humble opinion, social studies is the *most* important subject because it builds civil competence and teaches us lessons from the past so that we can address issues in the present. Now the diversity of Hawaii also encourages and teaches students tolerance for other viewpoints; a characteristic necessary for this rapidly globalizing world. Humans are naturally social creatures and by teaching them to be sensitive and aware of other genders, races, classes, religions, and cultures, we can learn to interact in a civil way. Personally, the most important lesson I've learned from social studies is to *listen*. After reflecting on the recent debt crisis, I felt that the greatest issue facing the Democrats and the Republicans were their inability to *truly* listen to one another. Now sure, both parties may have heard the other but they lacked the consideration for that other viewpoint. With that in mind, do we really want our next generation of students to be unable to listen and tolerate? I ask you today to consider my testimony and reject the proposed changes to the BOE policy 4540 and keep our four years of social studies. Thank-you.

From: Del Ishibashi/KAMAKAHELEI/HIDOE

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Dear Chairman Horner and Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to REJECT the proposed changes to BOE policy 4540 regarding the reduction of Social Studies credits from 4 to 3 and the elimination of Participation in a Democracy as a required social studies course. I am in favor of the Social Studies requirements as they currently are.

Social Studies allows the individual student to learn citizenship skills, to be an active participant in kids voting which will help them see how important it is to vote because it is your right as an American, to give them a chance to understand how our government operates nationally and at the state and local levels, allows the students to have tolerance for differing viewpoints and accept diversity among people and cultures, and exposure to different sources of information allows students a chance to explore about important events, people, and places.

Social Studies supports the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts when students have tasks like writing arguments, analyzing relationships between primary and secondary sources, distinguishing fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text, writing a summary, citing primary and secondary sources. These reading standards for literacy in Social Studies will support the student in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

Sincerely,

Del Ishibashi

From: Daniel Edelson <dedelson@ngs.org>

To: boe_hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us

Attached please find a letter on behalf of the National Geographic Society regarding the proposed decrease in the required social studies credits for high school graduation.

Text below for your reference:

August 15, 2011

Hawaii State Board of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu HI 96804

Via email

Dear Chairman Horner and Esteemed Members of the Board of Education:

I am writing on behalf of the National Geographic Society and in support of the Hawaii Geographic Alliance to urge you to maintain the high school graduation requirement of

four credits in Social Studies. Decreasing this requirement to three credits will diminish opportunities for students to understand their local, national, and global communities, prepare for civic engagement, and make informed decisions that serve the public good. This change will limit students' development as competent citizens and send an inappropriate message about the importance of history, culture, geography, government, and economics to the people of Hawaii.

We understand the demands on every state education system, and we support changes that benefit students. However, we cannot see any benefit to students or their communities when geography education – one strand of Social Studies programs – is further squeezed from the curriculum.

Since 1888, National Geographic has pursued its mission of increasing and diffusing geographic knowledge. At the National Geographic Education Foundation, we are focusing on the skills and knowledge that will enable students to make good decisions about their world throughout their lives. We know that our efforts align with your goals for a well-rounded, comprehensive education for every student in Hawai'i, and we look forward to achieving these common goals in the coming years.

The National Geographic Society has a longstanding commitment to the improvement of geographic education in Hawaii. We have supported the Hawai'i Geographic Alliance, based at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, since 1989. The Alliance is a public-private partnership that has directly benefited social studies and science teachers throughout the state. Today, we are very excited to be working with Dr. Jeff Moniz and other faculty in education and geography at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, the Maui Economic Development Board, and the Department of Education to scale-up the Alliance's impact.

Achieving geographic literacy is an important goal. By reducing the social studies credits required for high school graduation, you will be reducing the number of students that will graduate from high school prepared to make good decisions about themselves, their communities, and the planet. For that reason, we encourage you to reconsider the Superintendent's proposal to decrease these requirements.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel C. Edelson, Ph.D.
Vice President for Education
National Geographic Society
1145 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036 | dedelson@ngs.org | 202.828.6680
Web: natgeoed.org; Twitter: @NatGeoEdelson; Facebook: [facebook.com/geoliteracy](https://www.facebook.com/geoliteracy)
