

Select a committee	First and Last Name	Subject/Agenda Item	Type testimony in the space below.
Student Achievement	Gail Sandstrom	Board policy 4540 "High School Graduation and Commencement Policy"	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. 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 Parent
Student Achievement	Matt Mattice	Policy 4540 - High School Graduation and Commencement Policy	Hawai'i State Board of Education P.O. Box 2360 Honolulu, HI 96804 August 15, 2011 Dear Board members: My name is Matt Mattice and I am the Executive Director at the King Kamehameha V Judiciary History Center, a program of the Hawai'i State Judiciary developed to inform and provide learning opportunities about the judicial process and Hawaii's legal history. I am writing to express my support for Social Studies education in Hawai'i and opposition to the proposed Policy 4540. Our local and national governments have a vested interest in ensuring that the students of Hawai'i learn to take part in civic life. Within a constitutional democracy it is essential to provide civics education. Indeed, our founding fathers, men like James Madison and Thomas Jefferson expressed a sincere belief that without civic education, our constitutional democracy could not long survive. Respect for human rights, respect for the rule of law, fulfillment of one's responsibilities as a citizen, and the understanding that the common good is a concern for everyone are key to sustaining our American democracy. If our graduates are to fully exercis

Student Achievement	Kehau Glassco	BOE policy 4540	<p>Aloha Kakou, 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. Social Studies has transitioned from rote memorization to student centered historical research, analyzing primary resources, respectful discussions on difficult topics, empathy etc. These are the skills our Hawai'i children need for their life experiences. Social Studies also exposes students to new topics such as economics (which is so important today with credit cards, mortgage, taxes etc.), psychology, ethnic studies, American problems etc. As a social studies teacher, I know how important it is to teach the students historical writing, critical thinking, research, evaluation of sources, cause and effect etc. These are the skills students learn in social studies classes and if they have one less year of social studies they will not be able to practice these skills for college and real world applications. Given the choice, many</p>
Student Achievement	Kenneth Shimizu	Board Policy 4540 High School Graduaton & Commencement Policy	<p>I would like to express my sentiment on replacing a Social Studies core class with an elective course. I would like to say that I am in favor of keeping the core class and NOT replacing it with an elective. It is in my pesonal experieence that the majority of students are deficient in their preparation for higher education. I think core classes would better prepare students than an elective class. The majority of students would probably take lesser or easier electives rather than challenge themselves with a meaningful elective. The future of thousands individuals are in your hands. Please don't hamper their future. I am in FAVOR of keeping the core requirement and REJECTING Policy #4540. Thank you for your time.</p>

Student Achievement	Kellie Iwasaki	BOE Policy 4540	<p>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 a</p>
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Student Achievement	Amber Strong Makaiau	Policy 4540 and the Reduction of Social Studies	Aloha Chairman Horner and Members of the Board of Education, I am Dr. Amber Strong Makaiau. For the past ten years, I have been a social studies teacher and education researcher who has dedicated herself to improving public schools in Hawaii. Today, you are discussing the status of Policy 4540, and the purpose of my testimony is to make sure that the question of rigor is addressed in your discussion. Rigor means assessing what our students are currently capable of, and setting the bar higher. It means challenging the status quo of our schools by implementing systemic changes that compel our students to think harder, work smarter, and be better than they ever thought they could be. To make a rigorous department of education in Hawaii we have to have high expectations, establish institutionalized structures that translate our high expectations into student activity, and ultimately we will improve the outcomes of our learners. I know this from teaching Advanced Placement Psychology. When students come to my course I expect that all of them are capable of getting the highest score on their nationwide exam, instead of the
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Student Achievement	Nikki Morishige	Teacher Evaluation	<p>I would like to thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on the crucial issue of Teacher Evaluations and Career Development. Specifically, I would like to share my position on Teacher Evaluations at this time. I support a teacher evaluation that is fair and validated by research. The research soundly recommends that all stakeholders be involved in developing this product. Collaboration is a critical piece and the measures for student growth coupled with teacher observation require input and deep involvement by teachers. A well-developed teacher evaluation process is designed to have clear targets that are fair and coherent. It should be designed to support the practice of "teaching." Teachers should have opportunities to improve their teaching through a system of support designed to assist them at various levels, throughout their profession. The National Education Association recently passed their policy recommendations for Teacher Evaluation and we concur with many of their ideas, one which states: "Evaluations must be meaningful; providing all teachers with clear and actionable feedback linked to tailored profess</p>

Student Achievement	Ka'eo Vasconcellos	Proposition 4540	<p>As a social studies teacher for Roosevelt High School, I am against the reduction of social studies credit from four to three credits. I am against making Participation in Democracy optional too! First, social studies is the discipline where students learn how to create and foster relationships with others. The success of many businesses is due to creating and maintaining partnerships. Whether it is greeting with a handshake and collaborating on a project, social studies is the where students learn how to work with others to form partnership and develop relationships. Respect, compromise, being prepared, creating and executing an idea, speaking in front of an audience and conducting research are all skills necessary in business, college and life. Due to the importance of these skills, it is necessary that students have four years of them to practice and perfect. Social studies is the primary vehicle for these skills. Second, the idea that choice serves in the best interest of all students is not true. There is a big assumption that if students were given the choice they would take subjects they would be interested. Though it may work for some stu</p>
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Student Achievement	Todd Thomas	Teacher evaluations	Hello, I am writing to urge your committee to deliberate very carefully on any decisions that involve basing teacher performance evaluations on student test scores. Unintended consequences of action in this area have already been seen in other states, such as the cheating scandals in Atlanta and Washington, DC. If these reforms must be put in place in order to honor a federal contract, such as Race to the Top awards, then they must be created with teacher input. I understand the current situation seems hardly conducive to the state BOE and HSTA sitting down to work on this issue. I also understand that the Race to the Top money application promised action this year. However, as teacher evaluations impact teacher remuneration, the best path forward for all parties requires the state to reenter into bargaining with the HSTA over the current contract. The HSTA is an interested party and will be motivated to fully support teacher evaluation reform to the point of asking members to help the state come up with ideas on how to successfully implement reform in this school year. Choosing to force the teachers into the corner or

Student Achievement	Dennis Tynan	UPDATE/DISCUSSION ON THE STATUS OF BOARD POLICY 4540, "HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT POLICY"	<p>My name is Dennis Tynan and I am a Social Studies teacher in Nanakuli. As a proud member of the Aloha POSSE, I am testifying today in opposition to the Department's proposed amendments to Policy 4540...specifically the plan to cut the current social studies requirement from four to three and to entirely eliminate the requirement for Hawaii public school graduates to have to take a class on Civics. There are so many reasons this proposal should be voted down--and I know you will hear about most, if not all, of them from the inspiring numbers of people who have come down today to testify or sent in their testimony ahead of time. But I want to focus on what I believe is the major reason that Social Studies requirements should not be cut: and that is the moral argument that can be made. I was born and raised in Denver, Colorado and unlike many of the Board members here today, I am NOT a product of public school. I find it very interesting that my sixteen years of Catholic school education molded me into such a militant advocate for the public schools. And in analyzing how this happened, I have come to the conclusion it is bec</p>
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Student Achievement	Amy Perruso	Policy 4540 - Social Studies	<p>I would like to salute the Board for their attention to the issue of rigor. The students of Hawaii, when presented with high expectations AND the structured support necessary to achieve those goals, will rise to the occasion. But we as educators are responsible for providing that support, and we can be more strategic about how we structure and plan for our desired outcomes, using research-based best practices. ¶In particular, I would like to direct your attention to just one approach mobilized in the social studies electives curricula that have had demonstrably positive impacts on standardized testing outcomes. History Day is a program incorporated into many social studies electives in public high schools across the state, to great effect. In a recent national study, researchers found that NHD students outperform their non-NHD peers on state standardized tests, not only in social studies, but in reading, science and math as well. For example, on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), which tests reading comprehension, writing, mathematics, science and social studies, NHD students scored more than twice as</p>
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Student Achievement	Melissa Beavers	UPDATE/DISCUSSION ON THE STATUS OF BOARD POLICY 4540, "HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT POLICY"	<p>Aloha members of the Student Achievement Committee. 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.</p> <p>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, synthe</p>
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Student Achievement	Belinda A. Aquino	Social Studies Requirement	<p>My name is Belinda A. Aquino, Ph.D., currently Professor Emeritus at the School of Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa, where I served as Professor of Political Science and Asian Studies, and Director of the Center for Philippine Studies, for 35 years. I offer this testimony against the proposal to reduce the social studies requirement to three credits, and to support the existing requirement of four credits in the public schools. I'd like to underscore the necessity of social studies to understanding the issues of ethnicity, diversity and citizenship with particular reference to the rapidly growing Filipino community in the State of Hawaii. In the 2010 Census, Filipinos emerged as the largest ethnic group replacing the Japanese, thus making them the second largest population in Hawaii, next only to the Caucasians. Approximately 3000 Filipino immigrants arrive in the state annually, many of whom are children who will end up in the public schools; if this trend continues, Filipino children will soon constitute the largest student group in the school system. The public schools therefore face the</p>

Student Achievement	Sheala Karratti-Humphries	POLICY 4540--the omitting of the fourth social studies credit	<p>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 fo</p>
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Student Achievement	Soozi Kawakami	Proposed changes to BOE policy 4540	<p>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,</p>
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Student Achievement	Beatrice DeRego	Teacher Evaluation	<p>I am currently in my 15th year of teaching in Hawaii's public schools as a dual certified teacher in both English and History. Presently, I teach intensive reading classes to high school students who read from 3 to 6 grade levels below the appropriate Lexile level for their group. Some of the school's reading students receive services, others do not. Since students receive an English credit, I teach a tested subject area. On a good day, when my students are alert, fed, well rested, and motivated, they will still not meet proficiency on the HSA, or any other standardized measure for that matter. Some days they get close. Most days they come back feeling like failures. For many, they click through the new computer test as quickly as possible since they know the effort they put forth will not be good enough. However, in my classroom, students will hunker into the couch during recess to finish a chapter of a book they've discovered. They have exposed their love for history reading novels and essays of immigrants, and wars, and survival. They agree that reading can be exciting and can hold their interest, even if they may still prefer a movie</p>
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Student Achievement	Scott Robertson	Policy 4540	<p>Choice is good, except when it isn't. The upcoming Board of Education (BOE) vote on Policy 4540, which reduces the number of social studies credits required for high school graduation in favor of electives, has been promoted as an exercise in choice. But if choice is so great, why do we even have a curriculum? Let's just let kids and their parents decide what classes to take and then give them a diploma based on their customized choices. The most popular courses and their teachers will survive, the least popular courses and their teachers will vanish like dinosaurs. This is a ridiculous scenario because we believe that there is a core knowledge set that all students should be required to master as part of their education, and this core knowledge set is reflected in a curriculum. Are U.S. students really getting too much social studies education? Not according to national studies of student learning. A 2006 National Geographic-Roper Public Affairs poll found that almost half of 18-to-24-year-olds in the United States couldn't find Mississippi on a map and that 60 percent couldn't find Iraq. Thirty percent said it didn't ma</p>
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Student Achievement	Scott Robertson	Policy 4540	<p>As a professor in computer science, I am very concerned about the reduction in High School Social Studies requirements, including civics, currently being considered by the Board of Education as part of Policy 4540. Why would an educator in the sciences not want to see more emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) subjects? Because I want to see the schools produce informed citizens, college students with a breadth of knowledge, workers who can succeed in a global society, and well rounded, articulate, and informed grown ups. Let's think about these issues one at a time. We live in a democracy. It is the responsibility of citizens to elect public officials, understand how to judge their performance, and hold them accountable. No matter what our political persuasion, we can all agree that politicians say anything to get elected and do anything to put a positive spin on information about their actions. We need our students to learn about government, understand civics, and be able to find, read, understand, and critically evaluate political issues and politicians' statements and activities. They get these skills in civics and history classes. At UH, I teach a course in introductory computer science. I see many stud</p>
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Student Achievement	Corey Rosenlee	Social Studies requirements	<p>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</p>
Student Achievement	Liss Yamagata	teacher evaluation	<p>I would like to submit a testimony regarding teacher evaluations, and would like to argue against it being based on students' test scores. Although test scores can somewhat reflect the effectiveness of a teacher, there are many other factors that can affect a student's test score (family life, testing environment, student's mood, etc). I believe it would be completely unfair to evaluate a teacher on something that they do not have complete control over. What a teacher does have more control over is their curriculum and teaching practices. This, in my opinion, would be a more fair way to evaluate a teacher. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.</p>
Student Achievement	Greg Nakata	Against reducing Social Studies credit to 3 years.	<p>Social Studies focuses on research and analysis of historical events, people, and issues. Students compare and contrast, understand cause and effect, and make predictions to understand the present through history and theories. Without Social Studies in high school all 4 years, students ability to think at a high level(which is imperative for college and life)will be limited/narrow-minded. Are we willing to take that risk? Are we willing to take responsibility for what happens as a result of the proposal? Keep Social Studies a 4 year requirement.</p>

Student Achievement	Patricia Halagao	BOARD POLICY 4540, "HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT POLICY"	<p>The Honorable Chairperson Cheryl Kauhane and members of the Student Achievement Committee, Please allow me to comment on your proposed recommendation for board action on board policy 4540 "High School Graduation and commencement policy" specifically to reduce the social studies credit from four credits to three credits. As a former first grade teacher and currently a professor of social studies education at the University of Hawaii, I respectfully disagree with the Department of Education's proposal to reduce the credits based on the following research:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. According to 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), called the Nation's Report Card, Hawaii is above average in knowing US History. This is most likely due in part to our state's value and emphasis on social studies education. Do we want to capitalize on or jeopardize our positive achievement?</li> <li>2. According to the a survey conducted by the ASCD, the top-achieving nations around the world, like Finland, South Korea, and Japan, recognize the importance of social studies by giving it proper weight in the K-12 curriculum. By requiring four credits, Hawaii is leading the trend nationally and keeping up globally. Do we want to be</li> </ol>
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Student Achievement	Claire Gearen	Opposition to Board Policy 4540	<p>I am writing in opposition to reducing the social studies credit requirement from 4 years to 3 years. In 2010, I worked at the polling booths on primary and election day. On primary day, we collected more spoiled ballots than could fit in the lock box at the end of the day. We had to call for special instructions to secure the ballots. Educated people like those on the Board of Education are at a distance from the reality of the general populace; we need a strong civics education to make our democracy work. Many students will not get this education from their families. Our heyday as a state came on the heels of Dr. Miles E. Carey's leadership as principal of McKinley High, where in 1931 he introduced the "core" program, integrating English and social studies. The strong focus on citizenship shaped graduates who became the business and government leaders of the next generation. It is a mistake to privilege math and science courses over civics. Entrepreneurs such as Bill Gates, Jr. and our own Pierre Omidyar contribute to the common good likely in part due to their strong humanities programs at Lakeside School, Seattle and</p>
Student Achievement	Kevin Ng	Teacher evaluations based on test scores	<p>To Whom It May Concern, I am very concerned with teacher evaluations based on test scores. I do not believe a student's test score is an adequate indicator of teacher performance. A student's test scores are based on much more than what a teacher has and has not done in the classroom. How a student performs on a test is a combination of the child's school interactions, outside of school interactions, how he/she feels that day, previous childhood experiences, home life, consistency of reliable care-givers, mental and physical safety, availability of material things (food, books, toys, shower, clean clothes, Internet, computers, etc.), cultural values, and attitudes towards education just to name a few. I believe that if I am evaluated, I should be evaluated by the progress of my students rather than a test score. If a child does not meet proficiency or an "adequate test score," but has made tremendous progress in academics and behavior from the time he/she entered my classroom then that child has succeed and so have I. How do you evaluate me when I have assisted a timid, shy child to become a confident, leading speaker? How do you evaluate me if I encourage the biggest trouble-maker to find intrinsic value in helping d</p>



Student Achievement	Alison Denning	Teacher Evaluation	As a new teacher I have been evaluated twice in the past two years. I have come to understand through this evaluation that my degree, accreditation as a professional teacher, and previous experience with mentor teachers would be looked at, and that my presentation and teaching strategies would have to be successful. My administration and colleagues also supported me with advice and encouragement. Without this collaboration of individuals, I would not be the educator I am today. I urge the Board of Education to have all parties involved including the bargaining unit at the table in deciding the future of Hawaii's evaluative process for teachers. We all need to be involved and allowed to be decision makers for not only ourselves in our roles as teachers and leaders, but to set an example to students in our schools that our community can work together. Looking at test scores, places not only the burden on schools, but does not allow for us as a community and a state to lead by example, to raise the bar on compassion, and to create a thriving culture of integrity within this school system. Aloha for your time and consideration.
Student Achievement	Melissa Nelson	Graduation Requirements - Social Studies	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: 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 Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) does 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. We 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. Sincerely, Melissa Nelson MAED Secondary Education - ELA
Student Achievement	Brendan poff	Update/Discussion on the Status of Board Policy 4540, "High School Graduation and Commencement Policy	I can't understand what goes through your minds. Here you are telling teachers and students and parents how school should be rigorous but yet you are now taking away a core subject by one year. With already being thousands of miles of the rest of the country, kids that never ever leave the state much less their own islands, you need to have them understand their country and how it all works. Cutting out a year does nothing but harm. Don't you dare blame anyone else when it comes back around if you pass this. It's on your shoulders.

Student Achievement	Lauren Hill	BOARD POLICY 4540 "HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT POLICY"	<p>Aloha! My name is Lauren Hill, and I am a senior at Waiakea High School. I strongly disagree with the proposed idea to lower the graduation requirement of social studies credits from 4 to 3. First of all, learning about social studies is an important part of each child's education. In social studies classes, students learn about different areas, cultures, historical events, and more. Studying history helps people learn from, appreciate, and understand past historical events and their relevance to the present/future of society. The world is becoming an increasingly interconnected place. Countries interact more so today than they have in the past. Therefore, it is very important for the students of today's society to realize this and learn about other countries. This will provide them with greater global awareness, which can help them understand the changes that the country/world may undergo in the coming years. Secondly, there are already plenty of elective credits available for students to take advantage of. As a student, I personally feel that I have received enough of an opportunity to take the all the elective classes of my choo</p>
Student Achievement	Gail Tamaribuchi	Policy 4540	<p>To prepare students to successfully meet the challenges of the future, economics must be offered to all Hawaii's students. Economic literacy empowers people by giving them the tools to understand forces that affect them every day such as purchasing a home, getting a loan, voting for candidates and preparing them to be prudent consumers, producers, workers, savers, investors and voters. Basic economic literacy is critical in a democratic society. We all benefit by having an economically literate populace because it improves the public's ability to comprehend and evaluate critical issues to allocate resources that will contribute to rising efficiency, productivity and standard of living. Our nation's stability needs ls informed citizens who are engaged in the democratic process and can make informed and reasoned decisions for the "public good" as citizens of a diverse, democratic society. With the interdependence of the global marketplace and complex, intricate financial markets, the study of economics takes on more importance. Reduction of social studies credit from 4 to 3 will negatively affect the enrollment in the econo</p>

Student Achievement	Joseph Watts	4 social studies credits and participation in democracy	<p>Aloha, I ask the Board to reject the proposal to take away one of the social studies credits and the mandatory participation in democracy half credit. These classes are helping students to become better skilled in our democratic society's needs, especially critically thinking and civic minded citizens. Those who think Hawaii's students need more electives instead of these critical courses are probably not very much in touch with what is really going on in our high schools. Many students have too many choices, and end up wasting valuable learning time with less worthwhile choices than those being considered here. Most Americans are saying that today's students need more geography and economics and civics in school, so it seems very counterproductive to being going the reverse direction here in Hawaii at a time when we are talking about improving our education system. Please consider this and reject the proposal to replace these credits. Mahalo, Joseph Watts</p>
Student Achievement	Helen Slaughter	Oppose change to BOE policy 4540 requiring 4 credits of social studies, and elimination of Participation In Democracy course	<p>As an educator, and a grandmother of a public high school senior, I am against reducing the social studies course requirement to 3 credits, and the elimination of the Participation in Democracy Course. My areas of expertise are language arts education, and educational evaluation. The broad field of social studies which includes besides history, the other social sciences so important in our modern world view and in self-understanding, and for students, their understanding of the complexities of perspectives and decision making in life, is an area where students develop important critical thinking, writing and reading skills, all of which are important and essential as part of their preparation for post-secondary education and for life. At a time when the common standards are being used to direct instruction, and design improved assessment of student achievement, it would be extremely ineffective, and unwise to reduce rather than enhance the teaching of social studies in the high school. The vast area of the social studies provides an important field of study in which students can develop their literacy skills to a high level of proficiency.</p>

Student Achievement	Lory Shimizu	BOARD POLICY 4540 "HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT POLICY"	Dear Chairman Homer and Members of the Board of Education: Policy# 4540 I personally feel very strongly in keeping Social Studies credits to the maximum (4), and it's importance of cultural and civic literacy. In my opinion...students have more than enough electives to choose from to make well balance class/elective choices for their school year and it's application to their future needs. As you may know...they often say that the first 5 years in a childs life are the formative ones. Yes, I believe so...but also believe that the first 17 is as important, as we adults help guide them. If given the choice, I would think that our youth would love to have another elective...but would it be the one that they would benefit from? Shouldn't we encouraged our youth not to be satisfied with ordinary...but to be extraordinary individuals? With all good intentions, I am not sure how upping the graduation standard to offset core credits would benefit. Realistically...how many students would we fail to graduate? One Social Studies instructor mentioned, Hawaii is one of the few states that requires 4 years of social studies...although, again (Hawaii)
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Student Achievement	Sarah Nishioka	Proposed Changes to Policy 4540	<p>I am a current undergraduate student at the University of Hawaii and I was a Valedictorian of Mililani High School's class of 2010. I am strongly opposed to the changes in graduation requirements as currently proposed for Policy 4540. Sacrificing social studies credits for the sake of math and science will do more harm than good. Earlier this year, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan wrote an article entitled The Social Studies are Essential to a Well-Rounded Education. In that article, he said "Educators and policymakers need to recognize that social studies is a core subject, critical to sustaining an informed democracy and a globally competitive workforce." Participation in Democracy, a class that would no longer be mandatory under the Board's current proposal, is the kind of social studies course I believe Secretary Duncan was talking about. Choosing not to make this course mandatory suggests that the Board does not value civic education or teaching children about our democratic process. It is easy to say that people need to be informed citizens—but how do they become informed? The public education system, as</p>
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Student Achievement	Pamela M.T. King	BOARD POLICY 4540 "HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT POLICY"	<p>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. While I understand the motivation and need to increase the rigor of our high school curricula, I believe that the methods to achieve these goals contained in Policy 4540 are flawed for several reasons. First, supporters of the motion argue that they are increasing the "rigor" by requiring 2 science lab courses, which implies science "substitutes" (i.e.: food science, agriscience, aquascience, etc.) are not rigorous. Yet, their rationale for decreasing the social studies requirement is to give students more opportunities to pursue such courses (as food science, agriscience, aquascience, etc.) in possible career pathways that they are interested in. Maybe it's me, but their position seems to be a tad bit contradictory. Secondly, the current requirements already provide ample opport</p>
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Student Achievement	Justina Choi	Update/discussion on the status of Board policy 4540, "High School Graduation and Commencement Policy"	<p>Aloha, my name is Justina Choi. I am a recent graduate of Mililani High School and I will be attending Boston University this fall. When I first moved to Hawaii, my parents were extremely concerned about my education at the public high schools because of their infamous reputation amongst military families as "not that good." This is why I now praise the state's efforts to raise standards and graduation requirements. However, by reducing the social studies requirement, it would undermine efforts to prepare students for their futures. If today's jobs require more education, then how does reducing a standard in education prepare those children for today's jobs? At Boston University, two classes in the social sciences division must be taken in order to graduate - many of which cover the same topics as the social studies electives offered at Mililani High. Because my study in AP Government &amp; Politics, I believe it has prepared me not only for a more in-depth political science class, but also for any college level course. By having some background in the subject matter, it gives students the ability and confidence, like myself, to opt for a</p>
Student Achievement	Heather Demers-Keller	Social Studies Requirement	<p>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.</p>