

February 13, 2009

The Honorable Norman Sakamoto

Senate COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING

Hawai'i State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813 Room 225

Re: In Strong Support for Senate Bill 797, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE COURSES AT PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS STATEWIDE.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Firme, from James Campbell High School and I would like to speak in strong support on behalf of Senate Bills 797. I have been enrolled in my school's Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programme since July of last year and although I've only been in these programs for 7 months, I am extremely grateful for its impacts in my academic life and my development as a ~~character~~ ^{global citizen}. The significance of the IB programs is not merely attributed to its academic rigor, but its strong emphasis to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

It is composed of rigorous programs that encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right. It promotes intercultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of cultural and national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century, when national differences have become ever more present.

AP can change your life too. Through college-level AP courses, you enter a universe of knowledge that might otherwise remain unexplored in high school; through AP Exams, you have the opportunity to earn credit or advanced standing at most of the nation's colleges and universities, carrying the possibility of deferring classes and expenses at college.

Especially with the current economic crises, the need for the expansion of AP/IB programs is evermore essential because, through the possibility of providing students the opportunity to earn college credit, it also has the potential benefit for students to save money in college by deferring some college classes. Although investments to promoting advanced education may carry certain doubts especially during these hard economic times, all in all, even a small increase in investments for AP/IB would lead to a greater financial outcome with the possibility for students to save more money for college, and reduce expenses. By expanding these programs, we will further produce the compassionate, diligent, and altruistic leaders of tomorrow. Even with a slight increase in funds, can we produce a stronger community of motivated learners, a stronger state of communistic partners, and a stronger nation with hope for peace and empathy.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bills 797.

Senate Bill (SB) Number 797

Title: MAKING AN APPORPRIATION FOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE COURSES AT PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS STATEWIDE

Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Erickson Baniaga and I am a senior at James Campbell High School. I am testifying on SB No. 797, MAKING AN APPORPRIATION FOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE COURSES AT PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS STATEWIDE.

As an avid participant in our school's Advanced Placement program, I can personally attest to benefits of having such a program. It is through the AP program at my school, I have been exposed to college-level rigor. Through the program I have grown to become a mature, responsible young adult that is prepared for what the future has for me.

Both the AP and IB programs can be seen at our school. Although I was not able to take the International Baccalaureate program, I have seen the students who have. These students have transformed them into creative, service-oriented students. They have become leaders not only on campus, but off campus and in the community.

But not everyone has the opportunity to take advantage of what AP/IB programs have to offer. Many schools have limited AP classes, having less than 5 of the over 30 courses the AP program has to offer. There are only two certified, active IB programs in the state and only one of them is public. Although economic times are tough, even just a portion of money to help build these programs for other students will help. After all, to produce great students, and even greater leaders, is priceless.

Thank You

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Zachary Hahn and I am a junior at James Campbell High School. I strongly support this Bill because as an IB student, I know how much it can affect me and my life after high school. It gives students who want to excel a chance to do so. So far, IB has truly opened my eyes to what the world really is about and has taught me how become a better, more responsible person. During this economic challenge, it is becoming harder for students to get into college due to rising tuition and higher GPA requirements. These courses give students the edge they need to get ready for college and prepare them for life after high school. I'm also in support of this bill because of the No Child Left Behind Act. If it truly states no child gets left behind, then shouldn't AP and IB be included as well? I know that some schools in Hawaii don't even have any AP or IB courses, so they are not receiving the same opportunities they should be getting.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bills 797.

Senate Bill (SB) Number 797

Title: MAKING AN APPORPRIATION FOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE COURSES AT PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS STATEWIDE

Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Vinh Vong and I am a junior at James Campbell High School. I am testifying on SB No. 797, MAKING AN APPORPRIATION FOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE COURSES AT PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS STATEWIDE.

I strongly support this Bill because it has definitely contributed to my growth as a self-disciplined advanced placement student. Before I had taken AP classes at James Campbell High, my sophomore year, I thought I had been trying my best to get the best grade possible. I was indeed wrong because AP classes require students to step up on a whole new level of work ethics, time management, and self-discipline. Hence, AP and IB programs prepare us students for the next big leap in life, college. In addition, we all know that not many people in Hawaii are not very wealthy, but with AP classes, students can grasp the opportunity to save a lot of money. If a student passes the AP exam with a 3 and above (some schools give credits for 3's and many give for 4's, 5's are a definite), they get a college credit, which saves their parents money that they may have had to pay for one class in college. I myself want to pass the AP exam and get a college credit. My parents work day and night to provide me with a good education, and if passing some tests will save them a handful of worries, I will, beyond any doubt, try my best to do good.

There really is no problem with the AP and IB programs, and they have positively impacted James Campbell High, by showing that there are students here who are willing to step up to another level of work, in order to ensure themselves of a better future.

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Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Lord Ryan Lizardo and I am a junior at James Campbell High School. I am testifying on SB No. 797, MAKING AN APPORPRIATION FOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE COURSES AT PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS STATEWIDE. I am strongly supporting this Bill because I believe AP/IB is a great path leading into college. I am currently taking two AP classes and although the workload is stressful, I do believe that it is preparing me for the next level after high school. As a Sophomore last year, I thought that AP would be easy. Yet, after experiencing the storm, I will know what to expect in college two years in advance. I can only imagine what it will be like for those who do not have the opportunity to prepare themselves like I have.

Living in a nation where we are currently going through an economic crisis, the possibility of earning scholarships for college are becoming slim. My teacher stresses that the AP exam is a mini scholarship and I believe every word. This opportunity I have is one I cherish, even if sometimes I want to just quit.

So this investment in this Bill will make a huge difference in our educational boundaries as a state and a benefit for all students going into college. Many colleges are looking for those students who have taken the rigorous and ferocious courses. This Bill will likely give many more students a higher probability of getting into the college they desire. So I strongly hope that you will support SB No. 797.