



**Testimony to the Board of Education  
Tuesday, September 20, 2011  
10:30 a.m.  
Queen Liliuokalani Building, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor**

**RE: BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 4540 RELATING TO HIGH  
SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

Chairman Horner and Members of the Board of Education:

My name is Jim Tollefson and I am the President and CEO of The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber"). I would like to state the Chamber's support of the Board of Education Policy 4540 relating to High School Graduation Requirements and Commencement Policy.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing more than 1,000 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of its members, which employ more than 200,000 individuals, to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

The proposal encompasses a single college- and career ready high school diploma that is academically rigorous in order to prepare all graduates for the demands of college and job requirements. The focus of the diploma truly rests on standards and learning outcomes by our students instead of seat time. These standards will be measured by rigorous assessments, as developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, of which Hawaii is a governing State.

Workforce education is a high priority for the Chamber. To remain competitive, businesses need employees who are prepared to address the quickly altering demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. Today's students are not ready for the workplace and higher expectations. Therefore, a quality education with high standards is vital to the success of our students, communities and the economy.

The Chamber supports the proposal in which students who receive this diploma upon graduation will meet internationally-benchmarked standards that are aligned with college and career expectations. The social studies requirement will remain at 4 credits, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills will be embedded throughout the curriculum and educational experiences.

The Chamber urges the Board of Education to pass this proposal. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.