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April 23, 2014
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TESTIMONY TO
THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGET

RE: Bill 18 – Relating to the Minimum Real Property Tax

Chair Kobayashi, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Witt and I am executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 99 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 33,000 students statewide.

HAIS has concerns about Bill 18 which amends the minimum real property tax for organizations that serve a charitable purpose. As written, this measure could potentially pose a significant financial burden on already-struggling non-profits such as our member schools if the real property tax is steadily increased over the course of the coming years. Independent and private schools serve the important role of providing families with choices in the education of their children. As a result of the economic downturn, we have seen many of our schools struggle with balancing a high-quality education while still trying to make it affordable for families—some of our smaller, established schools were not able to negotiate that as well as others and had to close their doors.

We humbly ask that you reconsider the amendment to this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.