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# Junior Achievement®

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April 20, 2016

Council Chair Martin and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

Thank you for opportunity to speak in strong support of Bill 14, CD 1.

On behalf of Junior Achievement of Hawaii, I would like to thank the members of the Honolulu City Council for including our program for Grant-in-Aid funding in Bill 14.

With this additional funding, we will be able to have access to financial literacy, entrepreneurial, and career-readiness programs. 1,500 students, the equivalent of 80 additional classrooms in grades K-12 in Oahu's Title 1 public schools, will be served in the 12-month grant period. In addition 40 plus volunteers will be activated and provided training for these additional students/classrooms.

We have had tremendous success reaching out to schools across the island of Oahu – last year alone we were able to reach more than 4,000 students in 243 classrooms. Unfortunately, we did not have the resources, budget and staff to satisfy all of the requests that came in for JA Hawaii in-class programming last year. The Grant-in-Aid funding, will allow us to reach those new schools requesting our program, as well as doing outreach to many schools that we have identified across the island of Oahu.

It is amazing to see a kindergarten student be able to tell you the difference between a need and a want. It is heartwarming to see a fifth-grader, combine budgeting, entrepreneurship, and work-readiness all in one program. It is more than gratifying to see the light bulb go off with students during one of our personal finance or career success programs. They begin to think about the basic adult decisions they will need to make once graduation from high school. They also become aware of what it takes to be an exemplary employee, a team-player, and a good decision maker in the workplace. A recent study shows that just about half of high school seniors nationally are able to correctly answer basic questions about money and economics – some don't even realize the difference between a debit and credit card. Also, the same study also limits higher education opportunities, as many students do not understand the implication of student loans, credit cards, and basic budgeting, which as a result may cause students to permanently drop out of college due to personal debt.

The teachers at these schools, are also truly grateful, as every one of our programs from K-12 has a correlation to the Common Core Standards they sometimes struggle to incorporate. They also see the benefit of having a volunteer with real-life experience come in. We at JA call that real-life volunteer experience our "secret sauce."

Statewide, we reach 8,000 students in grades K-12 in both Title 1 and Non-Title 1 schools. It is our vision and my mission to expand the number of Title 1 students we reach in Elementary, Middle and High Schools here on Oahu, making your assistance is of utmost importance to our organization