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The ConCon and DOE

Ah, now I get it. According to Roger Takabayashi, president of the Hawaii State Teachers Association, the reason a Constitutional Convention (ConCon) is being opposed by the local and national teachers' unions is because a new amendment might do away with centralized control of Hawai'i's educational system.

Just about everybody in the state, who is not a schoolteacher and does not work for the Department of Education, thinks that centralized control of the school system is responsible for our state's dismal performance across the educational spectrum. They also think that leaving the DOE in control of the school system will virtually ensure that nothing will be done — ever. The school board has shown that it is powerless and inapt, and the Legislature has proven over the decades that it does not have the political will to make the necessary changes.

That leaves a ConCon. We can't wait another couple of decades to begin giving our children a decent education. Our children are not receiving the education and training they need to get good jobs and we are simply not getting our money's worth. The children of teachers, who are in the public educational system, are also victims of a substandard system. Just like the rest of the children, they are being penalized by the objections to meaningful change by their parents and union officials like Roger Takabayashi.

Lets give the ConCon a try. It will not cost nearly as much as the naysayers indicate. If island voters don't like the proposed amendments to the Constitution, we can always vote "No." But if we do like them, we may finally be able to do something about education in Hawai'i by voting "Yes" on ConCon.

And here is another incredible benefit: An educated constituency is the foundation of good government. No wonder the politicians are running scared.

• *Tom McAuliffe*
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

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