

Date of Hearing: January 25, 2008

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

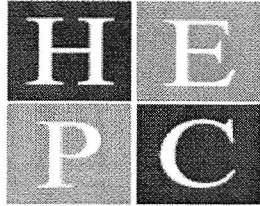
Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: H.B. 2026, Making an Appropriation to Hire Teachers Through the Teach for America Program

Purpose: Makes an appropriation to hire 10 teachers from the Teach for America Program to teach in high needs schools in Hawaii.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) supports H.B. 2026 to provide the additional resources to hire teachers in high needs schools through the Teach for America Program. The Department of Education currently has a contract with Teach for America that addresses many of the issues presented in this bill regarding personnel numbers and costs, related professional development costs, and on-going assessments to determine the effectiveness of the Teach for America Program.

However, funding priority must be given to the Board of Education's supplemental operating budget requests before this measure.



HAWAI'I EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER  
*Informing the Education Community*

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Education

January 25, 2008

by

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Hawaii Educational Policy Center  
University of Hawaii at Mānoa

**HB 2026: Making an Appropriation to Hire Teachers Through the Teach for America Program**

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Educational Policy Center (HEPC) opposes HB 2026, which appropriates funds to the department of education to hire ten highly qualified Teach for America teachers.

HEPC supports the intent of HB 2026, to appropriate additional funds to the department of education to hire additional highly qualified teachers. However we do have concerns about retaining appropriate authority over determination of qualifications.

The discretion as to who the Department should hire to meet its highly qualified teacher needs lies with the Department which needs to evaluate all candidates, rather than assuming that Teach for America teachers are indeed highly qualified, or more qualified than other candidates.

An additional issue is the preference implied in the bill for new arrivals over our own local students who are graduating as highly qualified teachers from our Hawaii Institutions of Higher Education. A more effective strategy would be to provide support for highly qualified local students to enter and remain in the teacher workforce.

As a recent report by the Hawaii Educational Policy Center pointed out:

- Barriers to Recruitment Process. Professors in Hawai'i college teacher preparation programs report that some newly licensed teachers are not offered positions in the DOE when they apply; that the initial posting of positions in the DOE is for tenured transfers and thus only after this period of time are such positions offered to new graduates, some of whom have already accepted positions in the private schools or outside education. Further, the emphasis on NCLB testing has "turned off" some prospective teachers who initially sought a career in the DOE, but instead seek employment in private schools or public charter schools.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.