

Statement of

Yolanda Dana

Teacher

Keonepoko Elementary School

15-890 Kahakai Blvd.

Pahoa, HI 96778

LATE TESTIMONY

Before the

House of Representatives Committee on Labor & Public Employment

Friday, February 8, 2008

State Capitol, Conference Room 309

8:30am

In consideration of

HB2753 – Making an Appropriation for Collective Bargaining Cost Items

Chair Sonson and Members of the Committee

I, Yolanda Dana from Keonepoko Elementary School, **strongly support HB 2753** and urge your Committee to vote for passage of this measure.

I teach 3rd Grade at Keonepoko Elementary School on the Big Island of Hawai'i. I strongly urge you to vote for the funding of the agreement between HSTA and the State of Hawaii board of Education for annual increments for teachers.

I teach at a Title 1 school in lower Puna. We are a rural school and many of our teachers have to make long commutes to get to work. The cost of living is high on the outer islands, and with the gas prices the way they are, long commutes create an additional financial strain on our teachers. Due to this, as well as other factors, Keonepoko is considered a "hard to place" school. We are constantly struggling to keep new teachers for more than one or two years. Annual increments are one way to retain and attract teachers to our state and communities such as Lower Puna. Many of these teachers would love to stay and teach our keiki, but they just can't afford to live here.

Please stop this "revolving door" of new teachers to our teaching profession. Help to keep our teachers teaching!

Vote for HB 2753 and annual increments for teachers.

Thank you for your continual support for students and public education.

Mahalo,

Yolanda Dana

808-965-2131

15-890 Kahakai Blvd

Pahoa, HI 96778

Email: danay001@hawaii.rr.com