

Date of Hearing: February 6, 2008

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: H.B. 2879, Relating to Parental Responsibility

Purpose: Holds parent or guardian liable for damages, injury, or death caused by child while on school grounds and requires parent or guardian to reimburse department of education for reward offered to identify the perpetrator, up to \$10,000.

Department's Position: The Department does not support H.B. 2879. Instituting a restitution fine as a parent's responsibility for damages, injury, or death committed by their child is punitive, non-educational, and non-meaningful. A restitution fine may serve as temporary deterrent, but it does not address the social, emotional, and/or psychological root causes as to why the student committed the act and the programs and services warranted for rehabilitation. The Department's focus is on prevention and wellness for all students and their families. If investments are not made in prevention, then the Department will be simply reacting to an increasing number of potential violent acts. One of the major intent's of the new Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) amendments is to strengthen the role of the parents. This was to ensure that families have meaningful opportunities to participate in their

education of their children. Society has changed. The presenting problems of today's students and families are complex. Simply fining a parent for an act committed by their child does not provide the necessary modeling and teaching of moral and ethical behaviors. The Department strongly recommends that further discussion and planning take place to address this issue before this bill proceeds further.