

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Education  
House Committee on Higher Education  
House Committee on Labor & Public Employment  
February 1, 2008; 2:00 p.m.; Room 309

## **HB2959 – Relating to Workforce Development**

By  
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Chair Takumi, Chair Chang, Chair Sonson, Vice Chairs and Members of the Committees, thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of the educational workforce Omnibus Bill, HB 2959, with the understanding that the legislative process will be “fine-tuning” the bill.

I am a member of the educational workforce working group that was created by Act 283, SLH 2007, and I wholeheartedly support its report to the legislature. I would like to direct the Committees’ attention to Part V of HB 2959, which implements one of the most important working group recommendations; establishment of penalties of truant students and their parents and guardians.

HB 2959 addresses the need for holding students and parents accountable for chronic absenteeism and tardiness to school. To address the high drop-out rate in Hawaii’s schools and drop-out factories, attendance statutes that allow for enforcement of Hawaii’s compulsory education statutes are needed. Penalties for a child’s persistent absenteeism and tardiness are assessed on the child’s parent or guardian or other person having charge of the child, who failed to use proper diligence to enforce the child’s regular attendance at school (“the responsible party”). If the problem persists, then the responsible party would be guilty of a misdemeanor and sentenced to community service first, second, third, and subsequent offenses. Other degrees of consequences include detention, prohibited from participating in one or more co-curricular activities, suspension of driver’s license or permit, home detention or curfew using electronic monitoring and surveillance.

The court would have exclusive original jurisdiction; however, before bringing an action into family court, administrative remedies would have to be exhausted. Support and tough love are needed to enforce our existing statutes on compulsory education.

Students need to attend school to learn. School’s responsibility is to make schooling meaningful, relevant, and purposeful. Alternatives and differentiated instructional practices are necessary to meet the needs of all diverse learners. But the first step is for students to take schooling seriously and be in school and on time everyday. This habit must be instilled to be carried out into the workforce.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.