

## LATE TESTIMONY

Representative Roy M. Takumi, Chair  
Representative Lyla B. Berg, Ph.D., Vice-chair  
Committee on Education

Representative Joseph M. Souki, Chair  
Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice-chair  
Committee on Transportation

Monday, March 24, 2008

Support of HCR 71 and HR 62, URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ONLY PURCHASE OR LEASE LARGE SCHOOL BUSES THAT HAVE AN OPERABLE SEAT BELT ASSEMBLY AT ALL DESIGNATED SEATING POSITIONS AND SEAT BACKS THAT ARE AT LEAST TWENTY FOUR INCHES IN HEIGHT.

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I strongly support HCR 71 and HR 62.

Hello,

My name is Sabrina Clark and I am a concerned citizen in favor of HCR 71 and HR 62. I support seat belts on school buses for the following reasons.

1. Though statistically safe, children do die in school bus accidents. Averages of 11 children are killed in school bus crashes per year and 2008 has already seen school bus fatalities. Hawaii has been fortunate with an absence of such fatalities, but an accident in Kaimuki involving a dump truck and a school bus caused 12 children riding the bus to be hospitalized. Though yet to be quantified by federal studies, most school bus accident fatalities occur in rollover crashes. Seatbelts will help prevent injuries in rollover crashes and side crashes more than mere compartmentalization, the current safety method used for school buses. The American Association of Pediatrics estimates about 6,000 to 10,000 children are injured in school buses per year and 3,000 to 5,000 of these children could be spared injury if they were wearing lap/shoulder seat belts. According to the 2007 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, shoulder/lap seat belts would make a child safer on large school buses. This Proposed Rulemaking also is proposing higher seatbacks from 20 inches to 24 inches as in HCR 71 and HR 62 . (see 49 CFR part 571 at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/staticfiles/DOT/NHTSA/Rulemaking/Rules/Associated%20Files/222UpgradeNPRMSept25.pdf>).

2. Loss of ridership is not an argument with the availability of "second generation" lap/shoulder seat belts as these seats combine compartmentalization with room for 2 large students to adults or 3 grade school students per seat, the same number buses currently carry. (See

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March 25, 2008

Written Testimony for the Education Committee

My name is Jade Wong and I am speaking as a concerned citizen. My largest concern with HCR 71 not passing is that it is against public policy and the public interest. Failing to install seat belts is inconsistent with disciplinary methods to teach children to obey the law. Studies have shown that consistency is paramount during a child's development years. It is detrimental to a child's understanding of abiding by the seat belt law if he or she must wear a seat belt in the car and not on the school bus.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, an average of eleven children die each year in school bus accidents nationwide. Four school children died last month in a school bus accident in Montana. This bill is a preventative measure to protect the kids in Hawaii against such fatalities.

The following organizations support this bill; the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, the American College of Emergency Physicians, the American Medical Association, the National Parent Teacher Association, Physicians for Automotive Safety and the Society for Adolescent Medicine. The following states have already passed a seat belt law; Florida, Louisiana, California, New Jersey, New York and Texas.

Texas raised funds to afford the installation of seat belts on school buses by adding \$10 to a moving violation. This is an excellent example for the state of Hawaii to follow. I urge you to pass HCR 71.