

House Committee on Education
Wednesday, March 12, 2008, 2 pm hearing, room 308

Joint Testimony of Na Lei Naʻauao Native Hawaiian Charter
School Alliance and the Hawaiʻi Charter School Network

In strong support of SB 2164 SD3 with proposed amendments

Chair Takumi and members of the committee:

I am here as the representative of Na Lei Naʻauao Native Hawaiian Charter School Alliance and the Hawaiʻi Charter School Network, two membership organizations that represent 29 out of 30 charter schools. We are in strong support of this bill proposed by Kanu o ka ʻĀina Learning ʻŌhana with amendments.

Specific amendments requested include:

1) Global find and replace, finding all references to Kanu o ka ʻĀina Learning ʻŌhana as the administrator of the fund with the definition "a single membership organization composed of all charter schools chartered in the State of Hawaii." Na Lei Naʻauao Native Hawaiian Charter School Alliance and the Hawaiʻi Charter School Network have recently agreed in principle to unite in a Hawaiʻi Charter Schools Network, operated by i Charter School Network expanded to include board representation for all charter schools in the State of Hawaiʻi. This amendment is intended to eliminate perceptions of partiality that accrue with having Kanu o ka ʻĀina Learning ʻŌhana named in statute as the administrator. However, the membership organizations I represent are comfortable with having an expanded Network sub-contract the management of this initiative back out to Kanu o ka ʻĀina Learning ʻŌhana as that entity has the capacity, expertise and resources already invested to operate the Hawaii Charter School Facilities Fund.

2) Removing all references to Hawaii 3R's as a model, as the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Taxation removed the tax credit provisions.

3) The measure was reported out of the Senate Ways and Means Committee with the Hawaii Charter School Facilities Fund as a special fund attached to the Charter Schools

Administrative Office (CSAO). The CSAO does not have the capacity to engage in this and the program design requires the nimbleness and innovation of the private, non-profit sector. Accordingly, we request all that all such references be amended to keep the fund with an expanded Hawai'i Charter Schools Network, operated by Kanu o ka 'Äina Learning 'Ohana.

4) Amend the appointment mechanism for the advisory fund to include the CSAO director as an ex officio, non-voting member, four appointments by "a single membership organization composed of all charter schools chartered in the State of Hawaii" and one appointment by the Charter School Review Panel. Clarify that the board's role is an oversight one, not an operational one. Add developing relationships with potential applicants to the fund as a board role.

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5) Technical, non-substantive amendments in the purpose section, primarily to update currently incorrect references to other bills which are no longer alive.

In addition, we would request consideration by the committee to add a new part to this bill, which also deals with the single purpose of public school finance.

We request a new part resurrecting language from the constitutional amendments for special purpose revenue bond bills, SB 2296 and HB 2794, heard in the Education committees of both chambers. The Attorney General expressed concerns that general revenues cannot be used to repay special purpose revenue bonds. Therefore, we have provided language eliminating references to special purpose revenue bond financing for charter schools and community development financial institutions. We have also provided language that expands the eligible recipients of such funding from non-profits that support charter schools to non-profits that support public schools. The committee should also be aware that the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools stands ready to provide assistance with

the implementation of this initiative based on their experience in doing so with the independent schools.