

February 11, 2008

The Honorable Norman Sakamoto, Chair
The Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Vice Chair
Senate Education Committee

Re: Support for Senate Bill 2230

Chairman Sakamoto, Vice Chairperson Tokuda, Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 2230. My name is Chadwick Kamei and I am the Director of Bands at Pearl City High School. While many other fine arts teachers may be able to relate to my testimony today, I can only speak for my program and our specific circumstances and experiences.

Senate Bill 2230 appropriates funds specifically for maintenance of the fine arts classrooms in secondary schools. Under our current weighted student formula, most of the school's budget goes into a general fund. The money is then allocated to different areas by the principal, a steering committee, and the School Community Council. Goals and needs are weighed but building maintenance is often too costly to consider for the school budget. Too often we are forced to make a decision to utilize money for school textbooks or repair of our facilities. Consequently, we end up "borrowing from Paul to pay Peter" and another year goes by without repair.

Pearl City High School has a unique condition because of our auditorium, known as the Pearl City Cultural Center. Built in 1994, the Cultural Center houses beauty pageants, business meetings, and music concerts. It is the only auditorium built specifically for music and run by a Department of Education school. Currently the building is

approximately 11 years old. With age come repair and maintenance needs, which is difficult for the school to provide.

The Pearl City Cultural Center is a special place for musicians. Visiting artists and conductors always remark at the acoustics and visual beauty of the Cultural Center. It has even become a recording venue for the latest Royal Hawaiian Band Compact Disc, "Christmas with the Royal Hawaiian Band and Friends". The Cultural Center also holds many school band, orchestra, and choir concerts and is home to the Oahu Band Directors Association Select Bands.

In recent conversations with our Auditorium Director, costs such as replacing light bulbs, repairing curtains, recovering seats, and purchasing new microphones, is expensive. Our auditorium staff is barely keeping up with replacing the aging equipment. This bill can help keep our facilities in proper order so that we can utilize it for future events.

As many of us already realize, much of the rental costs and utility costs that are paid by renting parties go back to the state general fund. The rental and utility fees do not come back to the school to help defray utility charges or help with maintenance. Additional funding or equitable reimbursements would help to keep proper maintenance of our fine art classes and facilities.

With the recent revelation of the disrepair at the University of Hawaii facilities, I implore the committee to take the necessary steps to fund this bill so that our facilities can remain functional and be maintained for future concerts and events.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of Senate Bill 2230. I hope that my testimony allowed you an inside view of our current situation concerning our facilities.

Thank you for your time.