

Date of Hearing: February 1, 2008

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

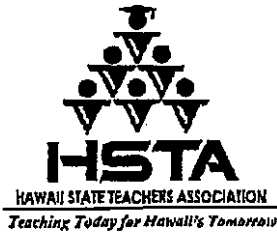
Title: S.B. 2669, Relating to Education;
DOE; Community-Based Exchange Coordinator; Volunteer
Website; Appropriation

Purpose: Amends law to add a new section (Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes) to establish a community-based exchange coordinator position in the Department of Education to facilitate and promote volunteerism and community partnerships.
Makes appropriation to the Department of Education for staff and launch of a volunteer website.

Department's Position: The Department of Education supports this bill. There is a need to increase volunteer resources in schools and to provide the support system needed so schools can more effectively recruit, manage, track, recognize, and retain volunteers. An increase in well-matched and timely resources will have academic and economic benefits as well as school-community relationship benefits. Volunteers supplement and enhance the role of professional school personnel and provide help that a school might not otherwise have or be able to afford. Research also indicates that volunteer involvement positively affects the

structure and operation of classrooms, the teaching practices of teachers, and public attitudes toward education. Organized school volunteer programs also need to be evaluated and successful programs recognized and replicated.

Funding for this program is also included in the Board -approved supplemental budget request. The proposed request aims to increase and sustain volunteer services and resources that include an increasing number of businesses, retirees from a Baby Boomer generation, college students, military groups, faith-based organizations, and alumni. Funds are also needed to provide for the use of commercially available and tested Web-based volunteer management software that will help schools to more effectively recruit, manage, retain, and track school volunteers and donors. Resources are also needed to provide training support to schools and build capacity at the complex area level to ensure sustainability beyond initial orientation.



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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

RE: SB 2669 -- RELATING TO EDUCATION

February 1, 2008

**ROGER TAKABAYASHI, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association supports the intent of SB 2669. We believe the community surrounding a school is a major stakeholder in the education of the children from that community. For this reason, community members are included on the school's community council. This bill, establishing a community-based exchange program in the Department of Education to facilitate partnerships with businesses and organizations in the community, will expand the involvement of the community in its schools.

However, HSTA has concerns about the language in Section 302A, (c), which includes faith-based organizations in the list of organizations with whom partnerships can be established. We believe the funding of a position to establish a liaison with religious organization could violate the Establishment Clause of the Constitution. We cannot support this bill unless the provision for faith-based organizations is removed.

Otherwise, HSTA supports this measure, since we believe it would be beneficial to give schools the opportunity to partner with businesses and non-religious organizations, along with assistance in identifying and contacting these community resources. Through such partnerships, teachers should be able to secure more resources which will help them provide a better quality education to their students.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.