



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD
650 Iwilei Road, Suite 201
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SB 3039 Relating to the Hawaii Educator Loan Program

Wednesday, January 30, 2008

DR. JONATHAN GILLENLINE, CHAIRPERSON
Hawaii Teacher Standards Board

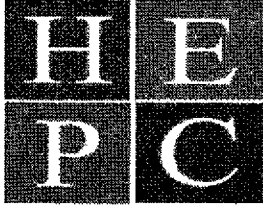
Chairman Sakamoto and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Teacher Standards Board supports SB 3039 Relating to the Hawaii Educator Loan Program. This program was originally established in 2001 through the support of the Hawaii Policy Group of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and the Board is happy to have been a part of that effort.

The value of this program is that it serves as an incentive for students thinking about teaching as a career while also rewarding them for staying in teaching for as long as 6 years. In this way, both the student and the school benefits from this arrangement, i.e. the student gains financial assistance and the school system is ensured that this new teacher will remain in teaching for at least 6 years. It has been reported that if a teacher remains in teaching for six years, it is likely that he/she will continue as a teacher.

We especially support the language on page 3 that allows a student to enroll in any State Approved Teacher Education Program recognized by HTSB and still qualify to apply for a Hawaii Educator Loan. This will provide for broader participation and impact. We are not prepared to comment on whether the administration of the program is appropriately described in the bill, but hope that this can be worked on further so that consensus is reached.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



HAWAI'I EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER
Informing the Education Community

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education

January 30, 2008, 1:15 pm, Room 225

by
Donald B. Young, Director
Hawaii Educational Policy Center
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 3039: Relating to the Hawaii Educator Loan Program

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Donald Young. I am Director of the Hawaii Educational Policy Center..

The Hawaii Educational Policy Center (HEPC) supports the intent of SB 3039, which seeks to provide funds for the original Hawaii Educator Loan program established by the Legislature in 2001.

It is unclear whether the Hawaii Educator Loan program has had the desired impact on recruitment and retention that was intended in 2001. The initial amount of funds appropriated was insufficient (\$100,000) to initiate a large-scale recruitment effort. Between 2002 and 2004, 23 students received loans. Funds in 2006 (\$600,000) were not available for loans. The funds appropriated in 2007 (\$250,000) by the Legislature for the HELP have not yet been received.

HELP was administered jointly between the UHM Financial Aids Office (FAO) and the College of Education. It seemed logical at that time to house it in the FAO while COE handled the application process and monitored the student's progress from application, to completion of program of study, to DOE employment. Post graduation employment monitoring was problematic without the DOE's assistance as UH doesn't have resources to follow up on graduates' placements.

The time for loan forgiveness may have been too long to be a particularly useful retention tool. These concerns appear to be addressed in SB 3039, and with sufficient appropriations, the educator loan program could enable the UH to recruit more students from underrepresented minorities and low-income households to serve as qualified teachers in rural and hard-to-fill geographic areas. The bill extends loan opportunities to students in any State approved teacher preparation program. This change is supported by the Teacher Education Coordinating Committee and will be effective in recruiting high ability students into the teacher education workforce.

A teacher working in DOE schools who graduated from any state-approved teacher preparation program, whether public or private, would qualify for HELP loans. Such a program, open to graduates of any qualified institution should help address the existing teacher workforce development problem and increase retention. Placing the burden of proof of qualified employment on the teacher reduces the State cost in tracking teachers for several years following graduation.

Extending both these loan programs to educational assistants is particularly important. In many cases, those who enter education as educational assistants are from low-income families, and many hold more than one job, making it difficult to pay what will be increasing tuition levels even at the community colleges.

I would also point out that the HEPC Interim Report on SCR 56 S.D.1, also finds that in order to bring focus to teacher workforce development issues, *the Legislature should require that a special Teacher Workforce Strategic Planning Committee be formed to create, adopt, adapt, track and evaluate the implementation of a Strategic Teacher Workforce Development Plan. The Planning Committee should seek annual and timely input from the Teacher Education Coordinating Committee (TECC), which includes representatives from the Department of Education, the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board, and all major teacher preparation programs in Hawai'i.*

The report clearly demonstrates the need for coordination so that the various efforts, including this one, are part of a comprehensive, cohesive, systemic plan and that we should no longer be supporting piecemeal, disconnected efforts.

SB 2698 proposes similar changes. However, we favor the language in SB 3039.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Date: January 28, 2008

Committee: Education

Hearing: Wednesday, January 30, 2008, 1:15 p.m. State Capitol, Conf. Rm. 225

Person Testifying: Dr. Valentina M. Abordonado, Director, Teacher Education Program, Hawai'i Pacific University

Title of the Bill: SB 3039

Purpose of the Bill:

Allows recipients of awards from the Hawaii Educator Loan Program to attend any university or college with a State approved-teacher education program and allows them to teach at traditional public or charter schools as a way to repay the loan.

Hawaii Pacific University Teacher Education Program's Position:

The Hawaii Pacific University Teacher Education Program (HPU TEP) is dedicated to preparing highly qualified teachers for the State of Hawaii, and as such, supports the Legislature's continuing efforts to address the critical shortage of teachers.

The Hawaii Pacific University Teacher Education Program concurs with the intent of this Bill and strongly supports the appropriation of funds for this program.

The proposed revision to the bill would allow teacher candidates enrolled in the state-approved teacher education program at Hawaii Pacific University to participate in this program, which was previously afforded only to students enrolled at public institutions. All institutions, both public and private, prepare highly qualified teachers for the Hawaii State Department of Education and no one institution is equipped to meet the critical need for teachers; therefore this program should be extended to all programs that serve our State.

As the largest private institution of higher learning in the State of Hawaii, HPU's Teacher Education Program represents a significant pipeline into the profession of education. Our field-based, standards-driven, inquiry-oriented, and technology-rich curriculum forms the basis for a quality program that prepares highly qualified teachers for Hawaii's public schools. The vast majority of our students are employed as teachers for the State Department of Education, and we have already begun to make significant contributions to easing the critical shortage of teachers in our State. Therefore, we believe that the Legislature would be well-

served to support this bill as it would provide an important incentive for all individuals seeking to serve Hawaii as public school teachers.