

Date: 03/18/2009

Committee: House Education
House Labor & Public Employment

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 1250,SD1(SSCR756) RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Clarifies that no teacher may be employed as an emergency hire for more than three consecutive years; unlicensed teachers employed as emergency hires after June 30, 1997, but prior to July 1, 2008, may be employed on an emergency basis for no more than four consecutive years. (SD1)

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) supports S.B.1250, SD1, which deleted wording "from date of employment" for the time allowed teachers to obtain licensure. However, the Department opposes the change of wording to "consecutive" years required to obtain licensure. Many teachers have a break in service in their employment with the Department from year to year. As an example, with the inclusion of the wording "consecutive" years, this will result in teachers being able to work several years, have a break in service for one year, then return and begin all over. Therefore, teachers may have an unlimited number of years to work without becoming licensed. This will defeat the purpose of the law which sought to align Hawaii's teacher licensure requirements with the criteria for highly qualified teachers as prescribed by the No Child Left Behind Act.

The Department recommends that the word "consecutive" be removed and revised as follows:

1. No individual hired after July 1, 2008 may be employed on an emergency basis for more than three years.
2. Unlicensed teachers employed on an emergency basis after June 30,

1997, but prior to July 1, 2008, may be employed on an emergency basis for no more than four years.

The addition of the date June 30, 1997 would clarify that individuals hired prior to 1997 would not need to demonstrate active pursuit of a license since licensing laws were not in effect until 1997. These changes would allow more teachers to qualify for employment with the Department, thus helping the Department to fill vacancies in shortage areas.