

Date: 02/02/2009

Committee: Senate Education and Housing

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 0016 RELATING TO CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD CHECKS.

Purpose of Bill: Authorizes the department of education to conduct criminal history record checks on volunteers in positions that place them in close proximity to children.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (DOE) opposes S.B. 16, authorizing the DOE to conduct criminal history record checks on volunteers. While the Department concurs with the intent and purpose of S.B. 16 to ensure the safety of our children in Hawaii public schools, implementation of S.B. 16 will require additional funding for fingerprinting volunteers. Fingerprinting the thousands of volunteers in our schools would incur substantial additional resource costs such as additional personnel, additional funding to cover background checks, additional travel costs to conduct appeal hearings statewide, and other related equipment costs. The DOE currently fingerprints over 8,000 prospective employees, current employees, student teachers, and practicum students (i.e., social, mental health, therapeutic or other related education programs from colleges and universities) yearly. The DOE expects that the addition of volunteers would, at a minimum, double the amount of people needing background checks. The current DOE budget for conducting criminal history background checks is inadequate to add volunteers at this time. If S.B. 16 were to become law in spite of these concerns, the Department requests that additional funds be allocated accordingly as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the

Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2009-2010.