

Date: 02/02/2009

Committee: Senate Education and
Housing

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 0261 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Allows the Department of Education to hire individuals with professional experience and university degrees as exceptional teachers. Authorizes alternative ways to become licensed, based on performance-based standards and giving credit for prior teaching experience in public schools outside of Hawaii and at accredited private schools, colleges, or universities.

Department's Position: The Department does not support S.B. 0261, as our current employment practice allows for exceptional teachers to be hired as emergency hires as long as they have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college/university. When there are no licensed teachers available for specific assignments, the Department will employ emergency hires. The Department wishes to reserve the right to determine teaching credit and will consider time taught at the university level. Credit is currently given to teachers who have taught at public and private schools in a K-12 setting. The Department continues to support alternative routes to licensing and defers to the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board to determine the criteria of teacher licensing in Hawaii.



LATE TESTIMONY

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

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND HOUSING**

RE: SB 261 Relating to Education

Monday, February 2, 2009

DR. JONATHAN GILLENLINE, CHAIRPERSON
Hawaii Teacher Standards Board

Chairman Sakamoto and Members of the Committee:

The Members of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board find SB 261 Relating to Education to be confusing because the changes it proposes are already provided for in current statute or administrative rules.

SB 261	Current Statute or HTSB Rules
Sec. 1 alludes to limited credit being given to prospective licensees for their teaching experience.	This is an employment issue in which for salary purposes, incoming teachers are awarded up to 6 years of teaching experience.
Section 3 of the bill seeks to allow individuals (called exceptional hires) with degrees from accredited colleges or universities to be hired by the Department of Education.	§302A-804 allows for DOE to employ emergency hires. While most of the DOE's emergency hires are either completing their license test requirements or waiting for their paperwork to be processed, other current emergency hires also match the description of Sec. 3 in the bill.
Sec. 4 seeks to waive the penalty for hiring unlicensed individuals.	All emergency hires are authorized by current law to be employed by the DOE.
Sec. 5 seeks to direct HTSB to authorize alternative licensing routes for unlicensed individuals with professional experience or degrees in the subject area to be taught.	HTSB's State Approval of Teacher Education process has authorized many alternative routes to licensure. The majority of individuals who become licensed in Hawaii do so through these alternative routes. They have degrees in a subject field or have been working as engineers, etc., and then aspire to become teachers.

Because the changes sought in SB 261 are already provided for in current statute and rules, we believe SB 261 is not needed and, if passed out, would only add confusion. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.