

SB799

Date of Hearing: Friday, February 13, 2009

Committee: Senate Committee on Education and Housing

Board: Education

Person Testifying: Garrett Toguchi, Chairperson, Board of Education

Title of Bill: S.B. No. 799, Proposing an Amendment to Article X, Section 2, of the Hawaii Constitution, to Clarify the Selection of the Student Member of the Board of Education

Purpose of Bill: Proposes a constitutional amendment to clarify the selection of the Board of Education (Board) Student Member.

Board's Position: Chairperson Sakamoto, Vice Chairperson Kidani, and members of the Senate Committee on Education and Housing, thank you for the opportunity to comment on S.B. No. 799.

While the full Board has not taken a position on this measure, at its meeting on February 12, 2009, the Board Committee on Legislation, Public Charter Schools & Public Libraries (Committee) voted to recommend support of S.B. No. 799 to the full Board. The full Board will be discussing/taking action on this bill at its general business meeting next week.

As Board members, we appreciate the valuable perspective and insight of the Student Board Member in sharing the day-to-day educational needs, experiences, and concerns of students in our meeting discussions. We feel that this input and perspective is critical in the development and

implementation of sound educational policies and decision making. We believe the Student Board Member enhances the Board's understanding and knowledge of current school issues. The "student voice" is an important and necessary factor in educational policymaking.

Granting the Student Board Member with the authority to vote will bring Hawaii's Student Board Member in line with several states, such as California, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Vermont, which have granted voting rights to their student members.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on S.B. No. 799.