

LATE

Date of Hearing: Thursday, February 26, 2009

Committee: Senate Committee on Judiciary and
Government Operations

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 Taniguchi, Vice Chairperson Takamine, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations, thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments on S.B. No. 799.

The Board of Education (Board) **supports** S.B. No. 799. 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 submit comments in supports of S.B. No. 799.

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February 26, 2009

To: Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair
Senator Dwight Takamine, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Judiciary and Government Operations Committee

From: Matthew Howard, Hawaii State Student Council Central District Representative

Subject: Support of Senate Bill 799, Voting Rights for the Board of Education Student Member

Aloha! My name is Matthew Howard and I am currently a senior at Mililani High School. I am the Hawaii State Student Council Central School District Representative. I strongly support SB 799 and I would like to ask for your support. Currently, the student member on the Board of Education assumes all responsibilities as the adult members and takes part in all activities, except the right to vote. With the Board of Education student member representing over 182,000 students from 250 primary and secondary schools, he or she should definitely be given a vote that counts. Students are greatly affected by decisions made by the Board of Education; therefore they should have an opinion or vote in these decisions.

The Hawaii State Student Council has been actively pursuing voting rights for the Board of Education student member since 1988. It is time that the voices of the students are heard. Students are the consumers of the Hawaii public education system; we have first-hand knowledge of our education system. The BOE student member brings an insightful student perspective to discussions on educational issues. The Board of Education student member is always highly qualified and demonstrates abilities in understanding and absorbing the issues that come before the board. Being the Board of Education student member is definitely not an easy job and certainly not a job for all students, but as a member of the Hawaii State Student Council we take pride in its rigorous process of selecting a well qualified, capable, responsible student.

In numerous surveys, students have voted in favor of voting rights for the Board of Education student member. For example, 79% of voters in the Kids Vote Election voted in favor of providing the Board of Education student member with full voting rights. It is not unheard of to provide a student member on a state Board of Education with voting rights. California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Tennessee, and Iowa are states that provide voting rights to their respective Board of Education student members.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I truly hope that you will support and pass SB 799.

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I Am Kelly Maeshiro, a student at Pearl City High School and the Leeward District Representative to the Hawaii State Student Council. I stand in strong support of SB No.799 for these following reasons:

1. Giving the Student Member a vote is simply democratic and represents the ideals that our nation was born of, those of a Democratic Republic, wherein self-representation and self-government are cardinal items. The students are the direct receivers of BOE Policy, so they should have influence on Board policies.
2. The student member is not liable to litigation while in office and is protected by the Constitution of the State of Hawaii.
3. The Board of Education Student member is the only member whose public role is in the school. He/she sees and understands the impacts of BOE policy and comprehends its implementation to the fullest extent and brings these unique concerns to the Board.
4. The Board of Education Student member is democratically elected by the students of Hawaii. Endowed within him/her is the voice of the 180,000+ students of Hawaii. He/she has proven time again his/her capacity to fully represent the students of Hawaii. He/she is at the top of the model of representation. Without his voice, the students have no voice.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2009 8:13 PM
To: JGO Testimony
Cc: heerthefood@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for SB799 on 2/26/2009 9:00:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for JGO 2/26/2009 9:00:00 AM SB799

Conference room: 016
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Evan Schlaich
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Submitted on: 2/25/2009

Comments: