

SB802

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 802

From

REPRESENTATIVE JOE BERTRAM III

February 11, 2009

Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair, of the Senate Education & Housing Committee and Committee members.

I write in **strong support of SB 802** SHADY PLAY AREAS.

Thank you for your support of this measure.

Date: 02/13/2009

Committee: Senate Education and Housing

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 0802 RELATING TO SCHOOLS.

Purpose of Bill: Requires DOE to include a shaded play area or areas of reasonable size on school grounds in its plans for all new elementary schools and to implement an ongoing program to provide a shaded play area or areas of reasonable size on the grounds of existing elementary schools.

Department's Position: The Department of Education **does not support SB 0802**. While we agree with the need to protect against sun exposure, we feel there are more appropriate means for doing so than via shaded play areas in schools, including educational campaigns encouraging the use of sunscreen for students and the community-at-large. Shaded areas are currently given consideration during the design phase in the form of covered playcourts and the planting of shade trees on campus. However, cost is an issue on most projects, and we feel that the participants in the design phase should retain the flexibility to consider cost reduction alternatives that include the deletion of a shade structure if other design components have a higher utility. For existing schools, funding for new classroom and support facilities and compliance projects is always short of what is needed. We feel it would be more appropriate to direct our limited funds toward those types of projects. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Shaelyn Botelho and I am a senior at Kohala High School. I am testifying on SB No. 802, Shaded play areas for elementary schools. I am opposed to this Bill. Although having a shaded areas for elementary students is a great idea because it reduces the risk of skin cancer and heat stroke, I feel that our state does not have the funding available for the construction of shaded play areas for all of the elementary schools in the state, especially at this time of budget cutting, where teaching positions, counseling positions, library positions and other important support services are being cut. The health of children is always most important, however elementary school recess time is shorter than middle or high school and not all middle and high schools have shaded play areas. Also doctors point out that a limited time in direct sunlight provides vitamin D, a necessary vitamin for healthy development.

Senate Bill (SB) Number: SB 802
Title: Relating to Schools

Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Vance Hiroshige and I am a senior at Pearl City High School. I am testifying on SB No.802, Relating to Schools. I am strongly opposed to this Bill for the following reasons; money could be spent in a better way, children will become spoiled, and maintenance of those areas will be a hassle.

If money will be spent on creating shaded areas for elementary school children to play, then why won't the state pay teachers better than they are now? It is a real waste of money in provided shaded areas when they are perfectly fine as is, which is having fun in the sun with their fellow peers playing physical games instead of sitting on the side because it's too hot to play. The money could be better spent by lowering lunch prices, providing better teaching equipment, or providing more extra-curricular activities to the students.

If the state requires that elementary schools have shaded play areas the children will become spoiled and lazy, resulting in more child obesity. This will happen because more children would just stay in the shade and talk rather than play tag or some kind of physical activities that help in building active lifestyles. Remember when we were in elementary school and tag after lunch with your friends was always something we looked forward to, if this bill passes then those days of tag will be over and children will be too lazy to do any physical activities.

What happens when those shaded areas put up start to deteriorate or something goes wrong with them and you have to fix them up, this will mean even more money

going to a useless cause. This will also cause more problems with who will fix it because it is really a useless product in the first place.

So Senators, I hope you will take into consideration what I have said and will reject this useless bill because it is a waste of time and money, which we do not need in this financial crisis that we are now in.