



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

Testimony of
Linda L. Smith
Senior Policy Advisor to the Governor

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday, February 1, 2010, 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Room 309

In consideration of
H.B. 1988, H.B. 1989, H.B. 2177, H.B. 2178,
H.B. 2376, H.B. 2377, H.B. 2424, H.B. 2428

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on bills that propose to restructure Hawaii's public education system. The Administration recommends that the Committee adopt the approach and language contained in the Administration-sponsored bills H.B. 2552 and 2553 (attached).

The first bill, H.B. 2553, gives Hawaii voters the opportunity to decide whether or not to amend the State Constitution to repeal the publicly-elected Board of Education and establish the Department of Education as a cabinet-level department. These constitutional changes lay the groundwork to restructure the State's public education system in which the Department of Education is headed by a superintendent that is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The proposed question to be placed on the ballot is:

"Shall the State Constitution be amended to make the department of education into a cabinet-level department, without an elected Board of Education, headed by a superintendent appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate, similar to other departments of state government?"

These changes will make the Governor directly accountable for the condition of public education within the State, as the Governor will be held accountable for his or her selection of the Superintendent, and the subsequent educational performance under

that Superintendent. Under this structure, Board of Education functions are transferred to the Superintendent with final decision-making resting with the Governor.

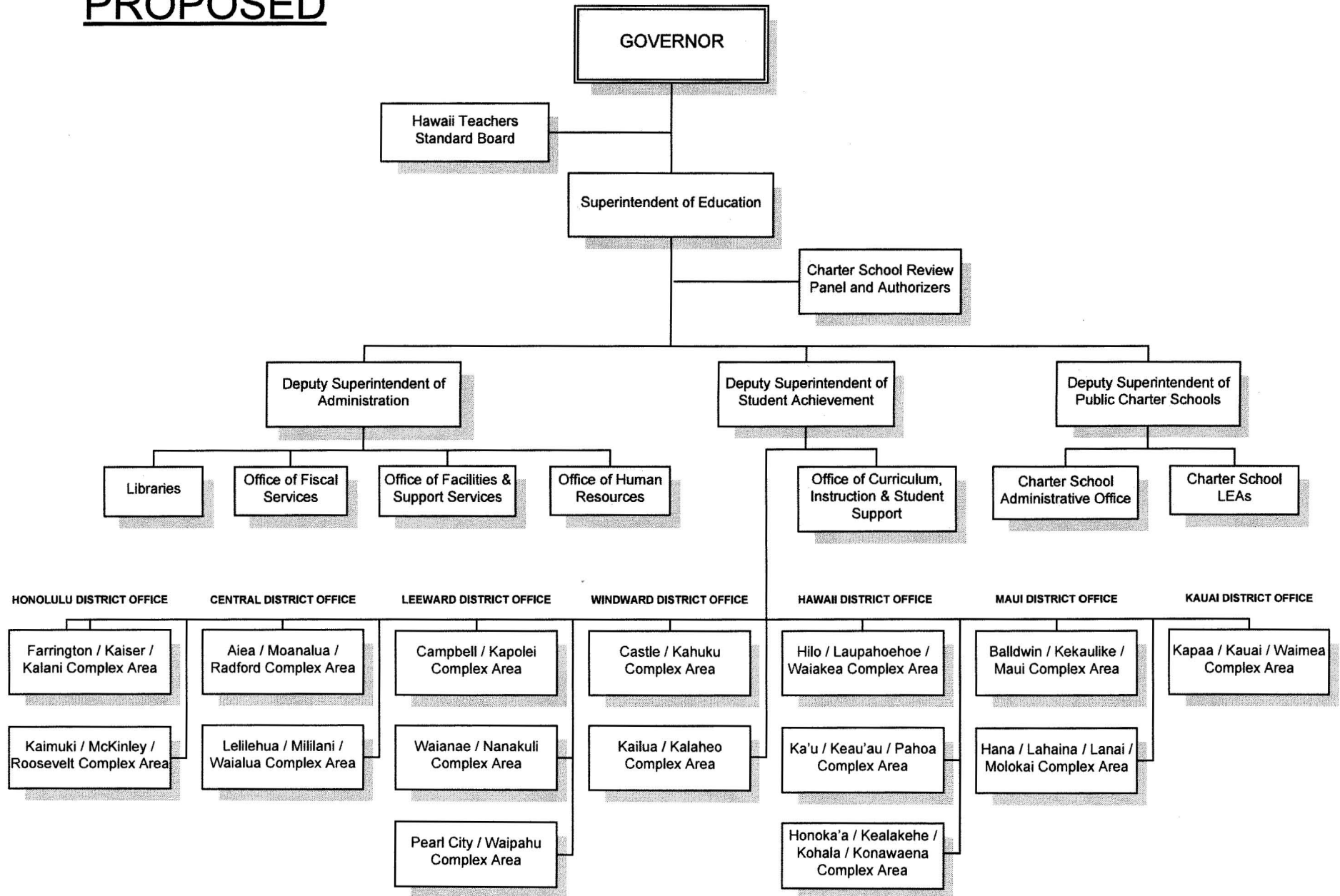
The second bill, H.B. 2552, makes the statutory amendments necessary to effectuate the new governance system proposed in H.B. 2553. The bill's key provisions are:

1. Repeals the powers and duties of the publicly-elected Board of Education and transferring most of these duties to the Superintendent of Education. For example, the Superintendent will have the authority to adopt administrative rules.
2. Authorizes the Governor to appoint the Superintendent of Education with the advice and consent of the Senate, which will align with the current process for selecting all other state department heads.
3. Authorizes the Superintendent to appoint three deputy directors. One deputy will be assigned to oversee the management of school administration, which will include the state libraries, fiscal services, facilities, and human resources. One deputy will focus on the department's efforts to improve student achievement through managing curriculum and providing students with the necessary support to improve student performance. One deputy will oversee the Charter School Administrative Office and facilitate development of public charter schools.

These changes will improve the State's ability to effectively manage its educational resources and execute policies and procedures. Parents, teachers, students, and the public at large will be able to hold the governor, as the State's chief executive as provided by law, directly accountable for the condition of public education within the State. A proposed organizational chart for the Department of Education is attached for the Committee's review.

We strongly urge the committee to adopt the language in H.B. 2552 and 2553, in lieu of the provisions in the bills being heard today. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

PROPOSED



Date of Hearing: Monday, February 1, 2010

Committee: House Committee on Education

Person Testifying: Garrett Toguchi, Chairperson, Board of Education

Title of Bill: H.B. No. 1988, Proposing an Amendment to the Hawaii
Constitution to Allow the Governor to Appoint the Members of the
Board of Education and the Superintendent of Education Upon
Confirmation by Both the House of Representatives and the Senate

Purpose of Bill: Proposes an amendment to Article X, Sections 2 and 3, of the
Hawaii State Constitution to allow the Governor to appoint the
members of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of
Education upon the advice and consent of both the Senate and the
House of Representatives.

Board's Position: Chairperson Takumi, Vice Chairperson Berg, and members of the
House Committee on Education, thank you for the opportunity to
testify on H.B. No. 1988.

The Board of Education (Board) opposes H.B. No. 1988, which
proposes a constitutional amendment to allow the Governor to
appoint the members of the Board of Education and the
Superintendent of Education upon the advice and consent of the
Senate and House.

Under this bill, Hawaii's elected Board of Education, *determined by the voters* of our State, would be replaced with an appointed board, *determined by the Governor and the Legislature*.

A Governor-appointed board would centralize educational decision-making too largely in the hands of the Executive Branch. Under H.B. No. 1988, educational decision-making would be weighted heavily under the Governor, with Board members and the Superintendent falling under the Governor's direction and appointment. Under such a governance structure, a Board member would have but one constituent: the Governor who appoints the Board member to office.

An appointed board and appointed superintendent would be partisan in nature, subject to the political affiliation of the governor at that particular time. An appointed board and an appointed superintendent would also be beholden to the governor, the appointing authority, with the governor having varying degrees of influence over his or her appointed members and superintendent in driving educational decisions and policy. An appointed board and superintendent would be expected to fall in line with the Governor's direction and influence over educational matters. Both an

appointed board and superintendent are more inclined to be in lock-step with the governor. For example, an appointed board under Governor Lingle would likely have furloughed teachers and other employees 36 days a year under her initial proposal.

Unlike an appointed board, elected Board of Education members are nominated in a *nonpartisan* primary election and are elected in a *nonpartisan* general election. A nonpartisan elected board assures independence in appointing a superintendent, without the trappings of political party affiliation.

An elected board is representative of a diverse cross section of viewpoints and individuals who are reflective of our communities. An elected board offers varying viewpoints that are discussed and hashed out publicly to form a Board position on policy and other educational matters. The great thing about an elected board is that anyone who meets the residency requirements, is a registered voter, and does not hold any other public state or county government office, can run for a seat on the state Board of Education. Former legislators, school administrators, teachers, a police chief, attorneys, social workers, a military officer, business executives, and others from diverse and varied professional

backgrounds and experiences have all served or serve on our elected board.

The Board believes that citizen control over education is essential to ensure that all members of our community have a say, a voice, and a vote as to who represents them on their state education board. Under an elected governance structure, voters assert their right to determine who serves them in office and have the ability to elect individuals out of office.

Changing the Board of Education from an elected board to an appointed board is no panacea for the challenges facing education in our State. There is no evidence that a shift to an appointed board will be more effective, or accountable, or improve student achievement. In fact, while the federal Race to the Top Fund grant advances educational reform in four specific areas: (1) adopting standards and assessments for student success; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success; (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals; and (4) turning around our lowest-achieving schools, the grant competition does not suggest an appointed board governance structure.

Educational improvements are a continuous process that occur over time. Educational improvements occur when our educational system, schools, and classrooms are supported with adequate resources, a strong curricula, effective teachers, and other direct learning supports and resources to help children learn. These will have the strongest and most direct impact on student learning and achievement.

Education should be supported by all decision-makers and important stakeholders involved in education: the Board, the Superintendent, the Governor, the Legislature, and the community. Responsibility and accountability must be shared by all involved.

A governance structure of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the Judiciary that includes the ability to manage its physical land assets, would make the Board and Department of Education autonomous.

Lastly, state boards have always been regarded as critical to insuring education as a state function, with the responsibilities of state boards reflecting two deeply-held educational values: the lay governance of education and the separation of educational

policymaking from partisan politics.

We ask you to entrust the public with the power to vote for their Board of Education members, as they do for their governor and legislators. Education is everyone's business, not just a few.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



1200 Ala Kapuna Street λ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
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Wil Okabe
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Karolyn Mossman
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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**RE: HB 1988—PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE HAWAII
CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW THE GOVERNOR TO APPOINT THE
MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SUPERINTENDENT
OF EDUCATION UPON CONFIRMATION BY BOTH THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE.**

February 1, 2010

**WIL OKABE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Chair Takumi and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association opposes this bill to make the Board of Education and the Superintendent appointed.

From the earliest days of our republic, American leaders recognized the central role public education plays in educating the whole people and creating a shared American culture and cohesive society. To this end, they created a citizenry group to guide and develop policies for education. These citizen groups are in every community across the nation and are known as school boards. School boards were chosen by the people they served. Today, 96% of the school boards are elected.

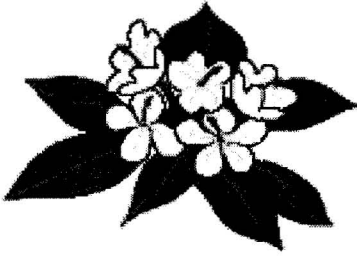
We believe in an elected Board of Education because we believe that an elected board is more likely to represent the view of the voters rather than the interest of the governor who appoints them. Elected board members would be accountable to the community, rather than be accountable to an individual, the governor. The electorate would hear what the candidates stand for and so would know what they were electing. Voters are more engaged, to know who the candidates are and to ask them questions about their positions. Under a system where offices are appointed, voters are not given an opportunity to directly question the people who will be making decisions. This interaction generates interest and ownership of our school system.

An appointed board would disenfranchise the parents who are active in the development of the school system.

The governor of the State of Hawaii is one of the most powerful governors in this nation. To allow the governor to appoint the board of education is to consolidate even more power in this office.

We urge this committee to not pass this bill out of committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
919 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 101
Honolulu, HI 96814
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov

February 1, 2010

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Ivalee Sinclair, *Chair*
Mr. Steve Laracuente, *Vice
Chair*

Ms. Brendelyn Ancheta
Ms. Sue Brown
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman
Ms. Annette Cooper
Ms. Phyllis DeKok
Ms. Mary Ellis
Ms. Debra Farmer
Ms. Gabriele Finn
Ms. Martha Guinan
Mr. Henry Hashimoto
Mr. John Hinkle
Dr. Martin Hirsch
Ms. Tami Ho
Ms. Barbara Ioli
Ms. Shanelle Lum
Ms. Rachel Matsunobu
Ms. Kristy Nishimura
Ms. Connie Perry
Ms. Barbara Pretty
Ms. Kau'i Rezendes
Dr. Patricia Sheehey
Mr. August Suehiro
Ms. Judy Tonda
Ms. Cari White
Ms. Jasmine Williams
Mr. Duane Yee
Mr. Shawn Yoshimoto

Jan Tateishi, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Representative Roy M. Takumi, Chair
House Committee on Education
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 1988 – PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE HAWAII
CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW THE GOVERNOR TO APPOINT
THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE
SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION UPON CONFIRMATION BY
BOTH THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE

Dear Chair Takumi and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State
Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
(IDEA), **opposes** HB 1988.

SEAC's position is that this amendment places too much authority in
the central government. It does not provide an opportunity for voters
to express their opinion to an elected board that is more accountable
to the voting public. In order to maintain this accountability, the
elected Board must maintain the right to select the Superintendent of
Education.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this issue.
Should you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them.

Sincerely,

Ivalee Sinclair, Chair

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg,
Vice Chair

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE,
REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

Testimony for: HB1988, HB1989, HB 2177, HB 2178, HB 2376, HB
2377, HB 2424, HB 2428

DATE: Monday, February 1, 2010

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 309, State Capitol, 415 S. Beretania St.

Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the Education
Committee,

Support HB 2177 and HB 2178

Hawaii's schools are failing and it isn't due to lack of funding or oversight. It is due to the lack of accountability and too much overhead. When many are responsible such as the Board of Education and/or the Legislature, then no one is responsible. The Board of Education (BOE) is unneeded bureaucracy. Eliminate BOE. Let our tax dollars, time and efforts go directly to hard working, dedicated teachers. I strongly recommend the Governor appoint the Superintendent of the Department of Education. Only then can Hawaii citizens hold the Governor responsible for what transpires in the Department of Education.

Oppose HB 1998, HB 2376, HB 1989, HB 2377, HB 2424, HB 2428

These Bills needlessly retain the Board of Education, and put the Senate, or the Board of Education Advisory Council with the Legislature between the Governor and the appointment process and increase or reapportion membership in the BOE. Eliminate the BOE. Allow the Governor to appoint the Superintendent.

Two Bills are not being considered today that relate closely to these scheduled Bills. Please consider giving **HB 2552** (could replace HBs 1989, 2178, 2377, 2428) and **HB 2553** (could replace HBs 2177, 2376, 2424) hearings as alternative solutions.

Sincerely,

Mary Smart
Mililani, HI

Hawaii Business Roundtable

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

Monday, February 2, 2010

2:00 p.m.

Conference Room 309

**RE: Support for:
Relating to Education
House Bill 1988
House Bill 1989
House Bill 2177
House Bill 2178
House Bill 2376
House Bill 2377
House Bill 2424
House Bill 2428**

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg and Members of the Committee:

My name is Gary Kai and I am the Executive Director of the Hawaii Business Roundtable. The Hawaii Business Roundtable fully supports legislation requiring the Board of Education members to be nominated and, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appointed by the Governor from pools of qualified candidates presented to the Governor.

The members of the Hawaii Business Roundtable represent companies in Hawaii that collectively employ over 70,000 people in Hawaii. These employees and their families and all of Hawaii deserve a high quality public Education System.

We believe that the current governance structure is ambiguous and has led to mixed priorities, conflicted leadership and a lack of accountability. Hawaii has had an elected board of education for 45 years that has contributed to the current status. What is truly needed is clear accountability and vision. The ultimate responsibility for the quality of

our Public Education system should be that of the highest ranking position in our State Government, the Governor, giving education the top priority it deserves.

While there are many issues to be resolved as we move forward, we believe that this change is a step in the right direction. Our members are prepared to be a part of, and support a team to create a new vision for Public Education in Hawaii.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify and we look forward to joining your efforts to improve Public Education in Hawaii.

Gary K. Kai, Executive Director
Hawaii Business Roundtable
1003 Bishop Street, Suite 2630
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

berg1-Matthew

From: Tim Smith [timsmithxa@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 2:09 PM
To: replynnfinnegan@gmail.com; EDNtestimony; Rep. Roy Takumi; Rep. Lyla B. Berg
Subject: Education Bills

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Rep Finnegan, Rep Takumi, Rep Berg et al--

The public education governance system here in our Hawaii Nei is a mess. As described below, I urge you in the strongest possible terms to enact the Lingle/Aiona proposals. Abolish the current farce of a board, make Ed a cabinet level office or department, with a leader who is appointed by the governor.

I urge you to do this immediately, and I want to be clear about this--many who unfortunately are not emailing you today are talking about this being a primary condition of your continued representation of the people of Hawaii at the state government level. This is absolutely the will of the people, and you should be working to enact it.

Sincerely,
Tim Smith

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

Testimony for: HB1988, HB1989, HB 2177, HB 2178, HB 2376, HB 2377, HB 2424, HB 2428

DATE: Monday, February 1, 2010

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 309, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the Education Committee,

Hawaii's public school system sorely lacks direct and clear responsibility and accountability.

Your committee is reviewing many bills on education governance but is failing to consider the ideas contained in the Lingle-Aiona package. **Please gut and replace HB 2177, HB 2376, or HB 2424 and replace it with the contents of HB 2553 in its entirety. Also, please gut and replace HB 1989, HB 2178, HB 2377, or HB 2428 and replace it with the language of HB2552 in its entirety.**

Of all the bills being heard today, I believe the suggestions in HB 2552 & HB2553 would help students, teachers, principals, parents, and community members to know who to hold accountable in our public education system. I am not in support of measures that make our public education system more convoluted than it already is.

I would also support the language found in HB 2376 that states "restructure the department of education to ensure that it is decentralized in a manner to promote student growth and achievement and greater accountability, monitor and protect student rights provided by law" but give this authority to the Superintendent under the governance structure of HB 2552 and HB 2553.

ADD ADDITIONAL COMMENTS HERE

Sincerely,
Name and Address

-----ADDITIONAL READING-----

ISLAND COMMENTARY

Hawaii's schools: A bureaucratic maze

The state's highly centralized education system perpetuates a sore lack of accountability

By Randall W. Roth

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 19, 2009

The governance structure of Hawaii's public-education system is unlike that of any other state. This would not be cause for concern if our students were thriving, but they are not.

Median scores on national exams put Hawaii in the bottom tier of all the states. It's been that way for many years.

Military and business leaders say the reputation of Hawaii's public schools makes it difficult to attract top personnel to the islands.

Labor unions say many Department of Education graduates are unable to pass apprentice exams.

The University of Hawaii says many DOE graduates are not ready to take college-level courses offered at the community colleges. According to placement exams, 79 percent need remediation in math and over half need remediation in reading.

The problem cannot be blamed on funding: Hawaii is 13th-highest among the 50 states in per-pupil operating expenditures, \$11,060 versus a national average of \$9,666. Hawaii's all-inclusive per-pupil annual expenditure is about \$15,500.

It also would be wrong to blame the teachers and principals. The Hawaii Business Roundtable said it well: "The teachers and administrators who serve our children are for the most part dedicated, talented professionals. These men and women are the solution to our educational challenges, not the problem. The problem is our system."

In every other state, individual boards govern an average of six schools, and a statewide body provides oversight. In Hawaii, a single board is responsible for 259 schools and for oversight.

No board can deal effectively with the diverse needs of 259 schools. And being accountable to oneself is the same as being accountable to no one.

Lack of accountability extends throughout the management ranks. No state education system, other than Hawaii, has unionized management. Try to imagine the managers of any other enterprise demanding near-absolute job security and salaries unrelated to performance or outcomes.

Yet another accountability quirk is that the Legislature decides how much money to appropriate and regularly mandates how some of the money must be spent (known as categorical spending and line-item budgeting); and then the governor selectively decides whether to release money that the Legislature has appropriated.

When each of three parties has a hand on the steering wheel, each can blame the others for missing a hoped-for destination. Or, as a former schools superintendent once put it, "When everyone is in control, no one is in control."

Hawaii's DOE has long been the most centralized school system in the nation. Gov. John Burns formed a task force that described this as an unnecessary byproduct of statewide (rather than local) funding:

"Centralized funding for education need not result in centralized or standardized decision-making. A persuasive case can be made for decentralizing decision-making in various areas because ... the most knowledgeable persons to deal with a

problem are oftentimes those closest to the children and the community. Such an approach starts with the role of personnel in the individual school or group of schools, rather than starting at the state office."

In his 1962 inaugural address, Burns pledged to decentralize the DOE. But the system remained highly centralized throughout his 12 years in office. Govs. John Waihee, Ben Cayetano and Lingle later tried to decentralize the DOE, but they, too, failed.

In 2004, the Legislature "reinvented" education, but five years later the DOE is still the most centralized, top-down school system in America.

All this is a serious indictment of leadership. Someone ought to be held accountable.

But in Hawaii's unique system, the buck stops nowhere.

READ RANDY ROTH'S FULL ESSAY ON PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUND AT
www.law.hawaii.edu/sites/files/rroth/Essay.pdf

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Tim Smith
Chi Alpha - Hawaii
TimSmithXA@gmail.com
(C) 808.783.6272
(F) 866.885.6031

berg1-Matthew

From: Kat Lobendahn [lobendahnk@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 2:12 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the Education Committee,

Hawaii's public school system sorely lacks direct and clear responsibility and accountability.

Your committee is reviewing many bills on education governance but is failing to consider the ideas contained in the Lingle-Aiona package. Please gut and replace HB 2177, HB 2376, or HB 2424 and replace it with the contents of HB 2553 in its entirety. Also, please gut and replace HB 1989, HB 2178, HB 2377, or HB 2428 and replace it with the language of HB2552 in its entirety.

Of all the bills being heard today, I believe the suggestions in HB 2552 & HB2553 would help students, teachers, principals, parents, and community members to know who to hold accountable in our public education system. I am not in support of measures that make our public education system more convoluted than it already is.

I would also support the language found in HB 2376 that states "restructure the department of education to ensure that it is decentralized in a manner to promote student growth and achievement and greater accountability, monitor and protect student rights provided by law" but give this authority to the Superintendent under the governance structure of HB 2552 and HB 2553.

Sincerely,
Katherine Lobendahn,
P.O. Box 159024,
Honolulu, HI 96830

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"You never will be the person you can be, if pressure, tension, and discipline are taken out of your life." James G. Bilkey - The Forbes Success Calendar 12/8. Carpe diem!

berg1-Matthew

From: Jamie Henry [jplh1959@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 3:15 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: Testimony Relating to Education Bills

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

Testimony for: HB1988, HB1989, HB 2177, HB 2178, HB 2376, HB 2377, HB 2424, HB 2428

DATE: Monday, February 1, 2010

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I am a single parent of a six year-old girl who attends private school. I have many more years of trying to provide her with the best education. Unfortunately, I am not confident that the State of Hawaii is able to provide a quality education. I do not have a high paying job, so I struggle to pay for her private school.

Please help families give their children a first rate education through public school. I attended public school in Colorado. My high school was equal to Punahou, Iolani and Kamehameha both in the facilities and quality of education. I see no reason why every child cannot and should not have the same education in Hawaii.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie P. Henry
94-837 Lumiauau Street, #L103
Waipahu, HI 96797

berg1-Matthew

From: Nancy Molloy [gary.swanson6@hawaiiantel.net]
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 3:58 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Cc: replynnfinnegan@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for: HB1988, HB1989, HB 2177, HB 2178, HB 2376, HB 2377, HB 2424, HB 2428

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

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Sincerely,

Nancy Molloy

415 South Street, #801

Honolulu, Hi. 96813

berg1-Matthew

From: Curtis Muraoka [director@whea.net]
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 4:52 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: Accountability in Education Measures

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Testimony for House EDN
Monday, February 1, 2010, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and Esteemed Education Committee Members:

I am writing to support the general intentions of HB1988, HB1989, HB2177, HB2178, HB2376, and HB2377. The main idea most commonly put forward in support of Hawaii's unique single education system is that it ensures equal distribution in resource allocation. As you know, this idea supported by the late Governor Burns also came with his caveat that equality of resources did not preclude a decentralized school system. The wisdom of Hawaii's greatest leader, bar none, should be allowed its day in the sun.

To that end, our recent visit with Undersecretary of Education Peter Cunningham in December yielded some sage silver-lining advice: "Don't let a good crisis go to waste." While I support the intent of these bills to be agents of change to varying degrees, I must point out that Hawaii public education is facing a perfect storm of *opportunity* to make large, durable and positive changes. In the context of global economic woes, struggling test scores, public criticism from the highest ranking federal education officials, and a staggering state budget future, but also being mindful of Race to the Top and ongoing ARRA support, Hawaii needs to realign its legislation and governmental structures to the greatest possible extent if it is going to maximize success.

I therefore encourage you to take the broadest possible course. It is clearly in the public interest that your Committee on Education take this crisis by the horns, and become bringers of significant change we need, and lasting changes our children and their children deserve.

Let the current crisis facing our public schools be the catalyst.

Sincerely,
Curtis Muraoka, Co-Director
West Hawaii Explorations Academy Public Charter School
Keahole Point, Kona

berg1-Matthew

From: Jerry Jackson [jj.seawolf@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 4:59 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: *****SPAM***** Testimony for HB's

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

Testimony for: HB1988, HB1989, HB 2177, HB 2178, HB 2376, HB 2377, HB 2424, HB 2428

DATE: Monday, February 1, 2010

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 309, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the Education Committee,

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Jerry Jackson, 1272 Alewa Drive, Honolulu, HI 96817

Tele: (808)590-2333

There is nothing like the Islands!

berg1-Matthew

From: Nancy Nagamine [alohanan@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 5:03 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: Testimony Education System

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

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achievement and greater accountability, monitor and protect student rights provided by law" but give this authority to the Superintendent under the governance structure of HB 2552 and HB 2553.

Sincerely,

Nancy A. Nagamine
42 Namala Place
Kailua, HI 96734

berg1-Matthew

From: FRANKIE MCCURLEY [mccurleyf@msn.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 7:55 PM
To: EDNtestimony; Rep. Lynn Finnegan; Ken and Tina Humphries
Subject: Testimony Submittal

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

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HB 2552 and 2553 will birth a system that can be held completely 100% accountable to the education of our Keiki. This is what Hawaii needs. Right now our educational system stands in a ranking well below the national average. Recent articles expose the fact that a majority of the students entering into higher education at the University of Hawaii need to have remedial instruction in math and reading in order to on par for the level of studies required. The current Board of Education and the system as is, is a non-functioning entity with proven unreliability and mass hysteria. The current system seems to care more about maintaining a political position of power than it does about the welfare of our future, the Keiki. We need a system where the leadership will be responsible and held accountable for the successful education of our children.

Sincerely,

Frankie L. McCurley
91-1048 C Hoomaka St.
Ewa Beach, HI 96706

Hotmail: Free, trusted and rich email service. [Get it now.](#)

berg1-Matthew

From: Melanie Gurath [melgurath@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 8:48 PM
To: EDNtestimony; Julie Kuhar

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair

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ADD ADDITIONAL COMMENTS HERE

Dear Sir:

My family moved to Oahu 2002. Fortunately my children ages 10, 12 had excellent schooling in Wisconsin. If I had relied on Hawaii's school system to teach them phonics and correct English, I would have been very dissapointed. Some of the teachers in my children's classes did not know how to teach English, much less, speak the language clearly. Often times I corrected my children's papers since the teacher did not and could not make the corrections.

At my daughters grade school at Holomua Elementary School , Ewa Beach, the teachers would give her the responsibility to teach the other students in her group. I did not think that was appropriate since she was not learning and she was not

getting paid to teach.

In group activities in grade school, middle school at Ilima, and high school at James Campbell High School, the other students would fail miserably in doing their part of the assignments and my children would get grades based on the group. Many students in this area or Ewa Beach do not care to work hard and it is not my children's responsibility to make them behave. It was unfair for my children to get a group grade.

The children at all levels of schools here are very prejudice against white people. They state out loud that they think all white people are rich. My daughter had many debates in high school trying to argue that we are hard working Americans that save our money for a rainy day and that nothing was given to us for free.

We need a superintendent assigned by the Governor and we need teachers that are not prejudice and that speak good English and phonics and know how to use it.

We also need drug testing. My children who graduated at the top of their class from James Campbell High School told me many times of the stoned students behavior that is not conducive to good studying or learning for the good students.

You may call me anytime if you want to speak with me personally.

Melanie Gurath 808-685-4483

Sincerely,
Name and Address

berg1-Matthew

From: Jerry Jordan [jordajw1@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 9:26 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Cc: Rep. Roy Takumi; Rep. Lyla B. Berg; Rep. Joe Bertram III; Rep. Jerry Chang; Rep. Faye Hanohano; Rep. Joey Manahan; Rep. Mark Nakashima; Rep. Karl Rhoads; Rep. Scott Saiki; Rep. Maile Shimabukuro; Rep. K. Mark Takai; Rep. Ryan Yamane; Rep. Corinne Ching; Rep. Kymberly Pine; Rep. Calvin Say; Rep. Lynn Finnegan; Rep. Blake Oshiro; Rep. Michael Magaoay
Subject: Testimony for: HB1988, HB1989, HB 2177, HB 2178, HB 2376, HB 2377, HB 2424, HB 2428
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Approximately six or seven years ago when Governor Lingle appointed a "Blue Ribbon Committee" headed by the now deceased Rod McPhee to assess the education system in the State of Hawaii, its shortcomings, and ways to improve it, for all intents and purposes it went nowhere. Many education experts testified and much was discussed; no results were effected largely because of political reasons. It is shameful that the children of Hawaii have been held hostage in this political standoff. It is time to get things done. A clear line of authority and accountability is mandatory - - something that has been woefully lacking throughout the history of education in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Jerry W. Jordan
46-031 Kumoo Place
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744
236-1480

berg1-Matthew

From: Jacquelyn Skaf [skafjacquelyn@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 10:39 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: Testimony for Education Reform Bills

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair

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We must hold the DOE accountable for the millions of public funds it receives every year in order to ensure that our children receive the best possible education.

Sincerely,

Daniel and Jacquelyn Skaf
67-145 Farrington Hwy
Waiialua, HI 86791

berg1-Matthew

From: madmonk@hawaiian.net
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 10:58 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: Our kids can't wait!

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair

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Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the Education Committee,

Hawaii's public school system sorely lacks direct and clear responsibility and accountability. The continuing failure of our public schools needs to be addressed in a timely manner...not deferring action (or passing another do-nothing reinventing education act) as another generation of students receives sub-par educations. How do we know the students aren't prepared for college? One clear indication is the very high percentage of incoming students who require remedial math and English classes in both community college and the University of Hawaii. These are students who do not have the skills of a high school graduate, but they have a high school diploma, so are in college. They were simply set up for academic failure by their own schools!

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It is time to realize our public schools are here for one thing...to educate our kids with the skills they will need in college, trade school, the military, and/or in civilian employment...not to provide lifetime employment for union members, not to provide unions with a solid membership base, and certainly not to provide a venue half-baked social experiments.

As parents, exchange student hosts, and foster parents, we've had 7 kids between us, 6 exchange students, and 17 foster kids...so far...over 20 of whom attended public (mostly high) schools here on Kaua'i.

Sincerely,

William & JoAnne Georgi
PO Box 51040
Eleele, HI 96705-1040

PS - I taught advanced technical training to both Saudi and Turkish students (as well as Belgian, Vietnamese, and American students). Unfortunately, even the Saudi high school graduates (who function at about a 10th grade level by American standards) seemed to compare favorably against Hawai'i's typical high school graduates. I do understand many of the problems in dealing with and teaching in a transcultural environment! And yeah, I also taught at the university level for both San Francisco State University and UC Berkeley.

William Georgi

berg1-Matthew

From: Markjul@aol.com
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 11:49 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Cc: Rep. Kymberly Pine
Subject: Education Concerns in Ewa Beach

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair

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I am the mother of two elementary children in the public school system. I have spent the past year and a half fighting the broken school system over issues that occurred in my children's school. I followed the "chain of command" and I went from the teacher to the vice principal to the principal to the complex area superintendent to the superintendent of education. Along the way, I also filed a complaint with the DOE Civil Rights Compliance Office. This whole process has been a nightmare for me, in part because there are no clear lines of responsibility or accountability in the school system.

My children attended Holomua Elementary School in Ewa Beach. I originally complained in September 2008 to the school about an assignment that required the first graders to declare in class where they really came from since the teacher explained that there is no such thing as "just" being American. Every child was expected, in this public school, to declare an ethnicity and then do a project about that ethnicity to be shared in class. I objected to this assignment on many different levels, and I wanted the school administration to know why I disagreed with it. I spoke with a vice principal, Rodney Luke, and

he said that the school was just following the state standards and that the over-arching concept that they consider with all of the curriculum is that the assignments should be relevant and it should not isolate the students. I felt that this assignment was both isolating and irrelevant.

I was curious about the state standards, so I checked the DOE website and I studied them. I quickly learned that Holomua was interpreting the Standards and twisting them in such a way as to render the "standard" meaningless. My oldest child had been at Holomua for over five years at that time, so I had many experiences and observations about the school. As I studied the standards, I realized that Holomua was sorely lacking in many other areas. I decided to write a letter to Norman Pang, the principal of Holomua. (It's twelve pages long and I'd be happy to forward it to you if you'd like to read it.) In the letter, I laid out the areas of the school that I thought could be improved and I offered suggestions how they could follow the standards differently than they were. I offered evidence from the assignments that were given to my children and observations that both my children and I had made over the years. I spent a week and a half on my project and then I dropped the letter off at the school.

Mr. Pang did not even acknowledge if he received my letter. I eventually tracked him down on campus a couple of weeks later and I asked him for a meeting. He told me that he needed more time to study my letter and he would call me in a week to set up an appointment.

When I finally met with Mr. Pang, there was no discussion about the many points that I raised. He simply told me that he reviewed my letter, and he showed it to the school's curriculum person, and they agreed that I was wrong about everything that I had to say. No changes would be made at Holomua because they were doing everything right. Mr. Pang told me that I could go above him to Vernon Young, the complex area superintendent, if I wanted to. As I left, Mr. Pang smiled at me and said, "Other parents have challenged me in the past, but none have succeeded. You can try." I could not believe how arrogant he was!

I eventually had an appointment with Mr. Young. I thought that this meeting went well, as Mr. Young sat with me for a couple of hours and he truly seemed to understand my concerns. He told me that he agreed that some changes should be made at Holomua and he asked if I would be willing to volunteer to help. I agreed. He said that he'd call Mr. Pang at the school but he warned me about going after Mr. Pang because, "Mr. Pang has a lot of friends at the DOE."

I ended up being invited into my son's classroom to give some lessons about America, but nothing else happened. I asked Mr. Luke if any changes would be made at the school and he said "no." Their policy of making all of the students identify themselves by an ethnicity was part of the plan to "celebrate diversity" and Holomua was not interested in my concerns that some students didn't even know that they were Americans, even though they were born in Hawaii. It certainly didn't bother them that our country is currently fighting two wars and the children of the soldiers were being told that they were not "just" Americans!

The Holomua administrators also did not care that, just weeks after the "ethnicity" assignment, there was an incident in my neighborhood. I had problems with my next door neighbor in the past, but we never had a confrontation before. Then, my neighbor (who also had a first grader at Holomua) started yelling at me she has lived in Hawaii all of her life and I should just go back to Germany. (My son had identified himself as German in his first grade class.) My neighbor went on about how she belongs here and I don't. The only place that my family had ever been associated with Germany was in my son's first grade classroom. I truly believe that this incident was directly related to the ethnic labeling done at Holomua.

I decided to file a complaint at the DOE Civil Rights Compliance Office. Two days after I mailed in my complaint, I received a letter back explaining that it was not the jurisdiction that office but that the facts showed that Holomua was following the state standards when they had the students give themselves ethnic labels.

In June 2009, I wrote a letter to Vernon Young, the Campbell Complex Area Superintendent, Daniel Hamada, the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, and Superintendent Patricia Hamamoto. I gave a final wrap up of my year at Holomua and I asked them to do something about the problems. None of them even bothered to let me know that they received my e-mail.

I pulled my son out of Holomua but my daughter wanted to complete sixth grade there since she had started in kindergarten. Sadly, soon after she started the 2009-2010, I had another problem at Holomua. My daughter's teacher had an incentive program in the classroom. My daughter explained that if the students did their work and didn't get into trouble, then they would get a, "You da bomb" ticket. She looked for the ticket in her bag and she found that it actually said, "You're the bomb."

The teacher had contacted me earlier and let me know that I should feel free to contact her if I had any concerns. I called her and I told her that the phrase was offensive to me. The teacher knew that my husband was in Iraq at the time and there are hundreds of military children who attend Holomua. I informed her that the phrase was literally describing a suicide bomber and I also told her that bombs are the number one killer of soldiers in these two wars that we are currently fighting. I asked her to change the phrase. The teacher told me that she had been using that phrase for five years and she never thought about it from my perspective. She apologized for offending me and she assured me that she would change it. I thought the issue was closed.

Two days later, I received a phone call from Mr. Luke, the vice principal. He informed me that Mr. Pang would not approve the change in the classroom. He saw nothing wrong with, "You're the bomb" and he wasn't going to change it for me. I immediately sent an e-mail to Mr. Young, the CAS.

Mr. Young wrote to me and he said that since Mr. Pang and I disagree about the award being called "You're the bomb" he decided to turn the matter over to the Holomua student council. Since the award was for the students, they should be able to decide what to call it. I couldn't believe it! The students should be given the power to override the teacher and principal! Mr. Young wasn't going to make any decision at all!

At this point, Patricia Hamamoto stepped in. She started collecting information on the situation. I sent lots of evidence and I hoped that she would simply call Mr. Pang and tell him to drop the word "bomb." She did not do that. In the meantime, I went to curriculum night at the school with my children. After listening to the acting principal, Todd Fujimori, talk about how parents should always feel comfortable talking to the teachers and administrators, I went to my daughter's classroom. From the time I walked into that room, I knew that I was being watched. A woman (I later found out that she was a new vice principal) was assigned to follow me around the classroom. She went everywhere my children and I did, and she never spoke a word to us. As I left the classroom, the teacher, standing beside a student teacher, asked me if I had any questions. I decided to ask her what happened with the "bomb" thing since she had never gotten back to me since our original phone conversation. She became flustered and anxious. She then asked if I had any curriculum based questions. I asked about the poor quality of some of the displayed work. She said that everything was grade level appropriate and she defended her classroom. As I felt the breath of the third woman on my neck, I knew that it was time to go.

Two days later, I received a call from Mr. Fujimori informing me that my daughter's teacher felt that I harassed her that night in the classroom and I was no longer allowed to go to her classroom or approach the teacher. My daughter could stay in the classroom but I would have to conduct all of my dealings through the principal. I couldn't believe it! They tried to set me up!

I had already made it up to the top of the Department of Education, and I did not find anyone who could help me. I was put in a very stressful situation, while my husband was deployed, and I couldn't believe that this state was set up in such a way. I didn't know who else to turn to, until finally I found the Army education liaison office. The Army liaisons accompanied me to Holomua when I withdrew my daughter from the school. We had a meeting with Mr. Fujimori and he admitted that a vice principal had been assigned to watch me at the school. He also clarified that Mr. Pang and the vice principals all sat around a table together and discussed whether or not "You're the bomb" was appropriate for use in the classroom. They found a dictionary that said that the phrase was a good thing so they decided that they didn't have to change it just because I requested it. The Army liaisons said that they would report their findings to Superintendent Hamamoto.

As time went by, I asked the Army liaisons about the status of my case. I believed that Mr. Pang should be held responsible for his actions. I was told that the case was confidential and I could not get any information on whether or not there would be any actions taken against him.

I also contacted Pacific Command. I found support in the Military Child Education Division. I was relieved that the federal government was willing to help me. I decided to send my ordeal Senator Daniel Inouye, too, just to inform him how my military family was being treated in Hawaii. At a time when politicians usually like to talk about supporting military families as if it was the duty of all Americans, I think that it's important to stand up and say the Department of Education in the state of Hawaii has been a source of great stress to my family. I believe that the individuals involved made some bad decisions, but the system itself is structured in such a way that it is very difficult to find anyone to hold accountable when there is a problem. There is no transparency in the system, either, so even after fighting for almost one and a half years, I have no idea if my work amounted to anything.

In December 2009, I learned that Mr. Pang was retiring. I was glad that he was leaving, but I wondered if my complaints had anything to do with his departure. As a military family member, I will move on from Hawaii but I will tell everyone what I experienced here. Many military families do not want to come here because of Hawaii's bad reputation regarding the quality (and now quantity) of education. I will let them know that my son was told that he was not an American and my daughter was encouraged to be a bomb! The leaders in the system were unable or unwilling to address my issues effectively and the education system itself is flawed. The structure doesn't make sense and there is not enough logical thinking in the leaders.

If the Superintendent of Education was a cabinet secretary, then there would be a clear line connecting her to the governor. I think that would have made things much easier for me. Clear lines of responsibility and accountability are essential if problems are to be addressed and resolved in a meaningful manner. I ran up against many roadblocks in my quest to make things better for my children and all of the children at Holomua, and I hope that no other families have to go through such a long, drawn out, difficult, open-ended process. I urge you to make real change to the educational system. Make the leaders accountable for their actions once and for all!

Sincerely,

Julie Kuhar
91-1055 Kailike St.
Ewa Beach, Hi 96706

P.S. Feel free to e-mail me if you would like additional information: markjul@aol.com

berg1-Matthew

From: Pete Finnegan [petefinnegan@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 8:33 AM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: Educational Governance Testimony

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR
SESSION OF 2010

**Testimony for: HB1988, HB1989, HB 2177, HB 2178, HB 2376, HB
2377, HB 2424, HB 2428**

DATE: Monday, February 1, 2010

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 309, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and members of the Education Committee,

Hawaii's public school system sorely lacks direct and clear responsibility and accountability.

Your committee is reviewing many bills on education governance but is failing to consider the ideas contained in the Lingle-Aiona package. **Please gut and replace HB 2177, HB 2376, or HB 2424 and replace it with the contents of HB 2553 in its entirety. Also, please gut and replace HB 1989, HB 2178, HB 2377, or HB 2428 and replace it with the language of HB2552 in its entirety.**

Of all the bills being heard today, I believe the suggestions in HB 2552 & HB2553 would help students, teachers, principals, parents, and community members to know who to hold accountable in our public education system. I am not in support of measures that make our public education system more convoluted than it already is.

I would also support the language found in HB 2376 that states "restructure the department of education to ensure that it is decentralized in a manner to promote student growth and achievement and greater accountability, monitor and protect student rights provided by law" but give this authority to the Superintendent under the governance structure of HB 2552 and HB 2553.

Sincerely,

Peter Finnegan

99-195 Ohekani Loop

Aiea, HI 96701

berg1-Matthew

From: David Hamman [integrity_key@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 8:15 AM
To: EDNtestimony
Subject: Education Bill Testimony

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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1/31/09

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Rep. Takumi, Chair & Rep. Berg, Vice Chair

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

Testimony for: HB1988, HB1989, HB 2177, HB 2178, HB 2376, HB 2377, HB 2424, HB 2428

I think it is high time that you own up to the fact that the present **centralized** Department of Education system in Hawaii is a major failure. It is time for you to recognize that the amount of money spent averaged out per student educated is almost equal to that of well known successful private schools such as the like of Punahou. Yet the results we our receiving versus the dollars spent are some of the lowest in the nation, rendering the Hawaii centralized school sytem a major failure / a disaster.

Bureacratic rules and regulations being dictated from a **centralized** governing department in Honolulu do **not** make good business sense. A centralized system does **not** encourage, enhance, or foster a sensitive local accountability to individual school districts or environments. It does not allow those who are closest in contact, and who have the greatest responsibility and risk at stake - the parents and teachers to make the choices most relevent to their children.

Why is the state attempting to "muscle" out parents and teachers? There is something eerily strange about why the state would want to restrict the parents and teachers from making the choices best for their children. It's almost reminiscent of Nazi Germany and the state indoctrination process that was being used to manipulate vulnerable younsters.

The present **centralized** DOE is excessively top heavy, unaccountable for the the enormous amount of resources it spends. Especially during this time of serious economic crisis it should be obvious that this unaccountable "monster" needs to be trimmed. We have just been intensely impacted by the disgusting self interest of this "monster" that chose to hurt the most vulnerable of our education system - the teachers and the children. Unaccountable DOE heads along with selfish union bosses chose not to make necessary cuts amongst vast multimillion dollar areas where there is obvious waste and "gravy" money for them and their cronies, but to furlough our teachers who make up a slight fraction of the DOE budget. With a locally run school system, not dictated by a totalitarian centralized system, this would not have happened.

You have seen the statistics relating to the poor results and performance record rendered by the direction of the totalitarian **centralized** DOE. Do you want your children and the children of Hawaii to continue to fail ? Do you want your children and the children of Hawaii to continue to be sucked into the crystal meth epidemic in the Hawaii State school system?

If the answer is **no**, then it is time to vote for legislation that de-centralizes the Hawaii State DOE. It is time to support locally run school systems that allow those who have the best interests of the children at stake to make the choices that encourage our children to be productive and succeed.

Sincerely,

David Hamman
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