

**HB2376**

**HD3 SD1**

**LATE**

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations  
Wednesday, March 31, 2010  
11:15 AM  
Conference Room 016

Chairman Taniguchi, Vice Chairman Takamine, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations:

My name is Mark Aoki and I am a junior at Roosevelt High School. I strongly support HB2376 (HD3, SD1).

Most voters are not informed on election day regarding candidates for the Board of Education (BOE). The results from 2008 justify this statement; over 300,000 left their ballot blank for the non-departmental school district (Hawaii State Office of Elections). This statistic demonstrates that election to the BOE does not represent a mandate from the people.

If we allowed a group of one hundred to represent the 178,000 public school students, thirty-five would be unable to read at grade level, fifty-six would not have the necessary knowledge to complete grade level math and sixteen would eventually dropout all together (2009 Superintendent's Report).

Mom and Dad have always taught me that when something is broken, it needs to be fixed. Our education system is, clearly, broken.

I acknowledge that changing the governance structure of a body will not be the panacea to our education woes; however, it can serve as a start. Placing members on the BOE that represent the will of the people will allow true reform to our system to occur. The advisory panel guarantees this. This panel, comprised of members from every stakeholder group (the community at large, the teachers, the parents, and the students), will nominate candidates that represent not only themselves, but also everyone involved in education. Members of the current BOE do not and as such reform efforts have failed in the face of politics and special interests.

Furthermore, a BOE appointed by the governor allows for the two bodies to be "on the same page" with one another. Our difficulty in finding a solution to "Furlough Fridays" comes not from monetary difficulty (the money exists in special funds), but from a lack of concurrence on the part of the BOE and the governor's office. Each group has differing political agendas, when the only agenda they need is putting education and the future first.

Education serves to set the future infrastructure of our great state; however, the status quo destines us to failure. The people have an opportunity to reroute the state's path into the future, replacing an ineffective system with one of accountability and capacity is a start.

My warmest aloha for your time,

Mark Aoki  
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