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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: HB 2424 – PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE HAWAII
CONSTITUTION RELATING TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

February 1, 2010

WIL OKABE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Takumi and Members of the Committee:

The HSTA supports HB 2424 and recommends its passage.

We believe that expanding the number of Board of Education districts, while reducing their size to three representative districts, and requiring that each BOE member is a resident of the district they represent, will bring the BOE members not only closer to the people and the schools within their district, but also more accountable to them.

This measure also would also be beneficial for candidates running for the BOE in that they will have a smaller constituency group and thus be better able to communicate with them personally and respond to their issues and concerns.

Our only concern would be the cost of additional members in these tough economic times.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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