

Testifier: Keri Guerrero, MSW Student
To: EDH/LBR Committee
Regular Session 2010
Re: HB 2486, HD2 RELATING TO EDUCATION
Hearing Date March 15, 2010

March 15, 2010

My name is Keri Guerrero and I am a MSW student at University of Hawaii at Manoa. I support the intention of this bill and agree that legislation should be enacted to maintain a minimum number of instructional hours.

As a student of the Hawaii Child Welfare Collaboration Education program, better known as the Title IV-E program, I have worked closely with youth in foster care in the past year. As a practicum student with Family Programs Hawaii, I have the honor of helping teenagers continue their education by entering college. It is a blessing to see how many youth in foster care want to continue their education and make their dreams come true.


When I speak to these youth, they explain how they wish there were no Furlough Fridays'. They see the importance of their education and how Furlough Fridays' have affected their knowledge. It causes them to have more work with less direction. They are eager to learn more but feels their opportunities are at a minimum because of this change.

Research illustrates that youth in foster care may not excel as significant compared to those who have established families. Because they have to make so many transitions in their life, they have a harder time establishing relationships and maintaining focus on their education. Allowing a minimum number of instructional hours per school year will help them improve in these areas. This will not only help them grow educationally but also in every area of their lives.

In the end, we are affecting our future because we are shunning our youth to reach their highest potential. These youth will be our future and it is important that we continue to foster their education so they may learn how to lead the next generations on the right path. Establishing a minimum number of instructional hours per school year will re-illustrate our value in the educational system.

Thank you again for your interest improving Hawaii's public schools. I truly believe this bill will create a huge difference in our youth's lives. If you have any questions, you make contact me at 389- 5750 or e-mail me at Kerig@hawaii.edu.

Aloha,


Keri Guerrero, MSW Student

Twenty-fifth Legislature, 2010
State of Hawaii
H.B. NO. 2486 H.D.2 Relating to Education
March 15, 2010
1:15pm Conference Rm. 225

Aloha. My name is Ronnie Bautista and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawaii, Manoa in the School of Social Work. I am testifying **in favor of H.B. NO. 2486 H.D. 2.**

Some of the reasons I am in support of the bill: Having a set number of instructional hours will allow our students to fully maximize their education. As we stand now, the lesser amount of instructional hours our youth have in their education have affected not only our youth, but our families and communities as well. Education is a priority; it is a worthy investment for our future generations.

Some of the concerns that have come up due to instructional hours being cut are the lack of priority given to education as well as the quality of education that our youth need, to be productive citizens. To some students, having two days out of the month may be a fantasy they could not believe happened, but the reality for them, is that they have to pay for it, the quality of their education is jeopardized. The curriculum is affected in that some of the activities to supplement their educations that would really benefit students have been cut out. Students are getting more homework, but having a teacher and a structure for them to learn is what's going to make a difference in these youth. Parents rely on the educational system to teach our youth and we need to keep our youth in school as much as possible.

How this affects families—parents have had to step up and take more responsibility for teaching their kids which isn't necessarily negative, but it does put more strain and stress on families, as parents now have to not only close the gap on teaching was should have been taught in school, to also, rely on other family members to take care of their children when they are not in school. If the parents do not have the income, resources or the support systems in place, our communities will suffer. What happens to our youth that do not have families? And what happens to our families, which do not have the time, income, the extended family members to take care of their children, the resources?? What happens to the segment of the community and population that do not have the support system??

At this crucial time, youth that are not in school and are not taken care of at home, have no place to go. As much as possible, we want our youth to be in school or in youth programs that will help them be productive and not in the streets. Due to the economy and the budget, our non-profits and social service agencies have taken a hit and will not be able to service our youth. Education needs to be a priority and if instructional hours are being cut, our youth need a place to go as a result. This is why I am in support of this bill. Thank you very much for your time and the opportunity to voice my stance on this bill.

Ronnie Bautista 
University of Hawaii, Manoa Graduate Student in School of Social Work.
808-832-7828

TESTIMONY to the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND
HOUSING and the SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR
For Hearing: March 15, 2010, 1:15p.m.

LATE

SUPPORT FOR HB2486 HD2

Chairpersons Sakamoto, Takamine, and members of the Senate Committees on Education and Housing and Labor:

My name is Elle Carvalho and I am a ninth grade student at Paauilo Elementary and Intermediate School. With me are my fellow classmates Nathan Tabucbuc and 7th grade students Kaili Brenamen and Sione Epenesa. We are here representing the Student Leadership Program at Paauilo School and support HB2486 which proposes to establish a minimum number of instructional hours per school year in all of our public schools.

It's Thursday afternoon at 2:15 p.m. The bell rings and I walk to catch the bus home. As I stand in line to board my bus, I tell my friend, "I'll see you tomorrow". She says, "I will see you on Monday". I ask, "why" and the dreaded words reach my ears, "it's FURLOUGH FRIDAY, there's no school tomorrow".

It has happened 13 times so far this year, no school on Friday. Speaking in minutes, I have lost approximately 4,290 minutes of instructional time this school year. This excludes lunch and recess minutes. That's a lot of minutes and the school year is not over. There are four more planned furlough days left on the calendar before the school year is over. I hope I get enough minutes to prepare me for the next hour, the next day, the next year, the next 10 years of my life.

What do students do on a furlough Friday? Talking to my friend and classmates, I can tell you that it is not instructional. Instructional activities require an instructor. On furlough Fridays, there are no teachers at school. What are our options? Complete our homework, watch television, go to the beach. These are the options that are presented to all of our youth who attend public schools on furlough Fridays. We attend school and are given guidance, directions, and instruction.

The school environment is conducive to learning. Watching television, playing video-games, and talking on our cell phones are not options in our school. Our teachers who provided instruction do not allow these distractions to interrupt our learning. Without our INSTRUCTOR, there are too many distractions available that prevent me from learning.

According to a recent survey conducted in February 2010, Hawaii Public Schools have less than a six and a half-hour day. In addition Hawaii Public Schools at 163 days have 10 less days than any other state. We are not asking to have the most instructional minutes in the nation, however returning to the original instructional minutes prior to "Furlough Fridays" would be a great start.

In closing, we have come to the State Capitol to submit our testimony, experiences, and our concerns in hope of bringing you a fresh perspective to inspire this committee to support HB2486.

We understand that the future of education is valuable to all of you. On behalf of the Paauilo School Leadership Team, we would like to thank you for this opportunity to testify.

TESTIMONY to the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND
HOUSING and the SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR
For Hearing: March 15, 2010, 1:15p.m.

LATE

SUPPORT FOR HB2486 HD2

Chairpersons Sakamoto, Takamine, and members of the Senate Committees on Education and Housing and Labor:

My name is Chancis Fernandez and I am an 8th grade student at Paauilo Elementary and Intermediate School. With me are 9th grade students Daisha Acorda and Johnathan Ancheta and 7th grade student Dayson Alip. We are here representing the Student Leadership Program at Paauilo School and support House Bill number 2486 RELATING TO EDUCATION

Before we speak about the specifics of HB2486, we would like to provide a brief description of our renewed passion for our program.

Approximately 11 years ago a group of community leaders identified a need for healthy and positive activities for rural youth along the Hamakua Coast. The group of leaders decided that the most efficient and effective means to accomplish this task was to involve local youth with planning and leadership. Thus, youth from the Kohala, Honokaa, Paauilo, Laupahoehoe, and Hilo communities were recruited to create the Student Leadership Program.

Participants of the program were given three basic tasks. These included: be trained in leadership techniques, organize community and/school service projects and developing an understanding of the United States Government.

Up until the 2008-2009 school-year, each specific Student Leadership Program received \$5,000 of state funding to support their specific activities and programs. As most of you are aware of, the present economic climate has caused extreme cutbacks and our program has lost a substantial portion of its funding.

Upon notification of discontinued funding the Student Leadership Program at Paauilo School had two options. We as students could watch things unfold and wilt under the circumstances or we could accept the risks and rise to the challenge. We as a group decided to do as we have been taught, and take the reins of our own futures. \

As of the school year 2009-2010 we were able to secure a \$2,000 Hawaii County grant and continue our Paauilo Tigers Track and Field Program which has been the primary community/school service project for the past 10 years. We have averaged 35 participants for each meet and all student-athletes were provided free transportation to Konawaena High School, a t-shirt, lunch, refreshments and snacks at each event.

In addition, we were able secure a donations from the Hamakua Community Foundation and Kahua Project to raise funds to cover air and ground travel to the State Capitol.

We, the members of the Student Leadership Program at Paauilo School, have come to the State Capitol to Support HB2486 HD2 because we refuse to let these desperate economic times dictate our future.

We at the Student Leadership Program believe that the purpose of HB2486 is to ensure that we students have a sufficient amount of classroom time by establishing a minimum number of instructional hours per school year for each grade level. We believe that if we already had a law like what is contained in HB2486, then it would have been unlawful for state's school systems to be affected by furloughs.

Each and every person of Hawaii is affected by the "Furlough Fridays" in some way or another. By legislating an exact number of minutes required by state law, we could preempt any possible attempts to further hold back the youth of Hawaii from achieving the education we need and deserve.

We appreciate this opportunity and we commend the sacrifices you have made in order to serve as our role models. We look forward to visiting all of you again.