

Testimony submitted for consideration in connection with the
Special Senate Committee to Consider Approaches to Teacher Furloughs
October 30, 2009 - 12:30pm
Submitted on November 3, 2009

To Whom it May Concern:

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to submit testimony on this very important issue. Perhaps I can provide a bit of background about myself, before providing my statement on this issue. I have lived in Hawai'i for only a very short time, approximately ten years. I was born and raised in Minnesota, where I was the product of public elementary and high school education. I attended school when Minnesota had one of the top public school education systems in the United States. My parents are both educators; my mother was a dean of a public community college and my father was a professor of physics at a small private college. I attended private colleges for my undergraduate, graduate, and law degrees. I am currently at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa working on a PhD in philosophy. I have no children; however, education and the issue of education are very important to me. So much so, that I have chosen to leave a potentially lucrative career as an attorney and pursue a teaching career.

When I first came to Hawai'i, I was told that the school system was bifurcated with private schools being extremely good and public schools being much less so. I was told that this was done on purpose, for, the state needed a steady supply of workers in the hotel and construction industry. "How well does one really need to read in order to fold towels?" this person asked. As a result, those who are destined to be Hawai'i's leaders went to private schools; those destined to be Hawai'i's workers went to public schools, which served them accordingly. I only partially believed this statement, being a newcomer, I already had been the victim of various "this is the way we do it in Hawai'i" jokes. Recent events, however, have caused me to think that perhaps this story is not that far from the truth.

As a teaching assistant and lecturer at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, I have had the privilege of working with students from as diverse places as Nanakuli and Farrington High Schools to Punahou and 'Iolani. I find both sets of students to be bright, creative, and inquisitive people. The main difference is that those from private school generally are able to write better. I do not believe that this skill in writing is the result of some innate genetic ability. I do believe it is the result of being required, from a very early age, to write. By the time they reach university, the private school students are comfortable with expressing themselves in the written medium. Again, it is not that the kids from Nanakuli or Farrington or Kalani have less to say, it is merely that often times they do not have the skill to say it. I further do not blame the teachers for this; since they work with limited resources and under extreme pressure from the No Child Left Behind provisions. However, instead of identifying this situation as a problem and solving it, this state has decided to exacerbate this problem by cutting the public school year. Whatever division exists between public and private has just gotten wider. You must be aware, by now, that Hawai'i has been featured in major publications, including *The New York Times* and *The Week*. We are portrayed as a state that does not care about public school students, a state that lags behind other states in quality of education, and a state who has

decided to balance the budget on the backs of its students. All in all, not a pretty picture. I further understand that various private school parents and teachers have lead rallies and provided testimony regarding this situation. Make no mistake, cutting the school year not only consigns public school students to diminished education and lower paying jobs, it consigns private school students to spending the rest of their educational careers explaining that while they come from a state with a worse education record than Alabama and Mississippi, states with historically and notoriously dismal records on education, they, in fact, received a wonderful education and are perfectly prepared to compete with other students at mainland colleges. Many will not be able to convince, regardless of how hard they try and how many extracurricular activities they have. Keeping kids out of school hurts everyone!

Perhaps, however, you all are aware of the problems with furloughing and the reason for its continued existence is that you simply do not have a solution to the budget problem. I have heard the idea floated that we should increase the General Excise Tax (GET) by 1%. I would be amenable to that with one condition. First, however, let me explain further my situation. I work part time as an independent contractor to the State of Hawai'i, Department of Human Services, which presently owes me approximately \$7500 in outstanding fees for services rendered. While that may not be a lot of money to some of you, it can keep my family afloat for about three months. In addition to not being paid, I also cannot pass on GET for services I render. Therefore, I pay GET on products and services that I purchase and I pay GET on services that I render. I am hit twice. The last increase in GET was extremely painful for me. The additional "rail tax" did not further help my financial situation, but that complaint is for another forum. I have no doubt that if a 1% GET increase goes into effect it will result in my family and me changing our purchasing habits and will cause us financial hardship. Nevertheless, I am willing to accept that increase if it means that public schools will not be furloughed and if it keeps the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa from entering retrenchment and/or cutting lecturer positions. This willingness comes with a condition. That condition is that the State Legislature agree to return to their 2008 pay, at least until the State economy rebounds and we are back in the black. Presumably at that time, we can lower the GET as well. I understand that legislators received a 36% pay increase in 2009, raising the standard pay for your January to May job to approximately \$48,000 with leadership receiving approximately \$56,000. Frankly, I know plenty of people who make less than that amount at their full time jobs. I know of no one who makes that much money at a part time job.

I realize that what I am asking may be difficult for many and even cause hardship. However, you all chose to enter public service. Having lived in Washington, D.C. for ten years and worked in various policy positions, my understanding was that often public servants gave up higher salaries in order to serve the public. Moreover, everyone, from the President of the University of Hawai'i to the Governor of the State is asking for people to sacrifice just until the economy improves. That sacrifice should come at all levels, mine as a lowly student/part time state worker as well as yours, as part time state legislators.

I do believe we can work our way out of this crisis. I do believe that we can think creatively and find ways to keep our state running without harming our students. I hope there is

equal belief on the part of this Legislature and that you all show the leadership strength, even it if means taking a temporary pay cut, to protect our state and our students.

Thank you,

Julia M. Morgan

[REDACTED]

Honolulu, HI 96813

Sen. Will Espero

From: Marguerite Butler [mailto:marguerite.butler@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Monday, November 02, 2009 8:26 PM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: October 30th Hearing Testimony

Categories: Print Big Island

Education Testimony -- please accept this testimony. I was present to deliver it in person. Thank you, Marguerite Butler Higa.

Dear Honorable Members of Congress,

Thank you very much for this opportunity for input on the current furloughs for public education.

I am a product of Hawaii's public education system, a proud graduate of Mililani High School (1985), and I am now an assistant professor in the Zoology Department at UH Manoa. I would like to tell you my story.

1) **We are already behind.** I graduated third in my class at Mililani High School. I left for college a semester early, having run out of classes to take by senior year. At Rennselear Polytechnic University, I went straight to the bottom of my class. For my mainland peers, freshman year was review. For myself and my husband (also MHS grad), everything we learned in high school was covered on the first day. We lacked not only the *content*, but also the study skills to excel in college. We fought our way back up, but it was a huge struggle. This was back in 1985, before the problems of today. **We cannot afford to lose any days of instruction.**

2) **Hawaii kids can catch up and succeed.** After catching up during my BS, I was fortunate to receive my Ph.D. at a prestigious university, earn postdoctoral fellowships and land jobs in academia.

I am now a professor at UH, and I teach Hawaii's youth. My students are seniors in college, about 50% from Hawaii and 50% from the mainland. Our local kids are just as bright and hard-working as kids anywhere. They are really smart and creative, but yet, the one word that characterizes them as a group is "insecure". They somehow get the message that they are not as good, not as well-prepared as people from the mainland. It takes me all semester to get them to relax, perform at their best, to unleash their creativity, and to believe that they can do it. They CAN do it.

However, I believe that by the time they are in high school, they know that school is too easy. They know that they have not been challenged to their full potential, pushed creatively, expected to perform at a professional level. This leads to insecurity. **We can no longer afford this tremendous waste of human capital, creativity, and productivity. We need to build up the next generation so that they can lead to their fullest potential.**

3) **School is not like work, learning cannot simply be delayed.** I am now a proud mom of a 3rd grader at Noelani Elementary School. I see wonderful things happening in the classrooms there. But I am deeply worried about school being shortened to 4 or fewer days per week for the rest of the school year.

Many people may not appreciate that learning is hard work. But as an educator, I understand that students learn new things every day. It is not like work, which is repetitive. They must continually master new material, which increases in difficulty. They need structured teaching, repetition, and creative approaches from different angles if they are to master new concepts.

The harm will be greatest to young children, who have developing brains. There are windows of opportunity in the development of a child's brain at which time it is easiest to learn how to read, solve mathematical problems, and other basic life tasks. **Learning is a developmental process. Stunting the learning of children for two years can never be made up. Their learning potential will be harmed forever.**

4) **Hawaii's Government is completely opaque.** I returned to Hawaii after being away for 20 years, and I can honestly say that I do not understand how anything works, despite the fact that I am a local girl. The governor is not concerned with education. The DOE is accountable to whom? Who is representing the children and their educational needs in all of this? Who has the right to rob the children of their education? There is tremendous energy in the all of the concerned parents, friends and ohana. But

WHAT DO WE DO? Please do not let this opportunity go by. Be the leaders we need. Create the educational system that our keiki so richly deserve. Do not furlough the keiki.

RESTORE FUNDING FOR EDUCATION. We will support you.

Thank you very much for your time and efforts.

Marguerite Butler Higa

Marguerite A. Butler
Assistant Professor
Department of Zoology
University of Hawaii

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Sen. Will Espero

From: Linda Kress [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 02, 2009 5:06 PM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: October 30th

Dear Senator Espero - I'm unsure if you are the correct person to write. I would think the Union are the one's who should re-open contracts.

I am Johnny's mom, Johnny's 5 and goes to Sunset Beach Elementary in Haleiwa.

Honestly, the furloughs do not effect my son the way the effect other people's children such as the high school or middle school children who need to know the importance of education and need their teachers there for them to teach them.

The furlough Fridays are not right, it saddens me that this has taken place. Is public school actually a right? I think it's a privilege! I don't agree with raising taxes, but I could afford to pay a monetary amount every month for my son to attend public school. I'm sure, out of the 20 students in my son's class, probably half could pay a reasonable monthly charge.

We need to emphasize education. Please let me know what I can do to help. I don't feel like I'm doing enough!

Linda Kress

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 164 Bishop Street, Suite 710

[REDACTED] Honolulu, HI 96813

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Sen. Will Espero

From: Karen Umemoto [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 02, 2009 3:34 PM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: Furlough Fridays

Categories: Print Big Island

Dear Sen. Espero,

I am writing to express my growing concern over the closure of school on Furlough Fridays and urge a Special Session of the legislature to find a better alternative that does not sacrifice the students first.

Mahalo,

Karen

Karen Umemoto, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Urban and Regional Planning
University of Hawai'i at Manoa
[REDACTED]
H[REDACTED]

Sen. Will Espero

From: Jean toyama [toyama.j@hawaii.gov]
Sent: Monday, November 02, 2009 3:14 PM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: furloughs

Categories: Print Big Island

Dear Senator Esperor,

Got a solution? One needs to be found.

Thank you,

Jean Toyama

[REDACTED]

Sen. Will Espero

From: Barbara Farr [mailto:barbara.farr@hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 5:37 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: Friday Furlough

Categories: Print Big Island

Senator Espero,

Thank you for taking an active role to address the needs of our children's education.

Other states find themselves in similar situations, but have not needed to take such drastic action. I spoke to some friends in other states and their solution within the Department of Education was to start at the top and work their way down with cuts. This allows them to not effect their real purpose, those that work with students.

The idea that all state jobs and programs have equal merit is simply untrue. I am sure the state government can muster the mental fortitude to put a plan together that works for our children, but the will to put aside political bickering must be there. The government needs to work together to put our children and their future first. I don't worry about my own children as much as I do those whose parents are struggling to make ends meet and have to make difficult choices that unfortunately don't always put the children's best interest first.

Also, stories that keep circulating about how janitors are working on days that there is no school is simply outrageous. Unions here in Hawaii are part of the problem, they need to get on board for this special session and put the children first as well.

Thanks for your efforts!

Barbara Farr

Sen. Will Espero

From: Erik Anderson [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 12:24 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: support for ending furlough Fridays in public schools

Categories: Print Big Island

Dear Senator Espero,

I am a registered nurse, and the only reason I am able to provide competent patient care today is because of education. You and I will both need a competent nurse at some point in our lives. Let's ensure that future nurses are as competent as those today by restoring a full-time public school schedule. Let's do what's right for the children of Hawaii.

Erik Anderson
234 Pauahilani Place
Kailua, HI 96734

--

Erik Anderson
[redacted]
[redacted]

Sen. Will Espero

From: Liz Berry [mailto:berry@hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 12:21 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: Furloughs

Categories: Print Big Island

To whom it may concern:

I would be willing to pay more in taxes to keep the kids in school. I think it is ridiculous that they are the ones suffering.

Education is the last thing that needs to be cut. Thanks so much!

Liz Berry

[REDACTED]
Honolulu, Hi 96815

Sen. Will Espero

From: Denise and Kevin Collette [mailto:collettek@hawaii.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 12:11 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: Furlough Days

Importance: High

Senator Will Espero,

I am writing on behalf of my children who the state of Hawaii seems to have left behind. I am disgusted by the decision to partake in this Furlough idea. Of all the places to cut back, and I do understand the state needs the money, but to take away education? What do you think will happen to all the kids that will have no place to go when the parents have to work? My son is 11 now and right now I am fortunate to stay home to be there but that could change at any time. What trouble do you think these kids can/will get themselves in when they are bored and home alone? My daughter will be going into the three year old preschool this coming year and we purposely extended our tour here to make sure she would have that advantage. What will happen to the special education classes? Forgot about those kids too? That is what it seems the state is doing...it is a joke how this was settled. I've already experienced how my daughter's early intervention services have been cut and it boggles my mind that people actually thought this was a good idea??? Boggles my mind. I couldn't believe it that was it the same day the furloughs were being announced, I heard President Obama is making a statement that the school year should be longer and how important education is. Really?? The state our president proudly calls home is doing this to our children? Wow, is the only word that I can think of now that would be appropriate to say.....I wish I could be a fly on the wall when he realized he's making these statements and at the same time Hawaii is dropping the ball. It would almost be funny at the irony if it wasn't so sad!

Please, please, please do your part to have a voice for our children. They are our future and they need education to be successful and they get that start in the early years. What message are we sending to our children that their education is not important enough to fight for?

Thank you!

Denise Collette
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Sen. Will Espero

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 02, 2009 10:43 PM
To: Sen. Roz Baker; Sen. Shan Tsutsui; Sen. Robert Bunda; Sen. Suzanne Chun Oakland; Sen. J. Kalani English; Sen. Will Espero; Sen. Carol Fukunaga; Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. Brickwood Galuteria; Sen. Josh Green; Sen. Colleen Hanabusa; Sen. Clayton Hee; Sen. Fred Hemmings; Sen. Gary Hooser; Sen. David Ige; Sen. Les Ihara, Jr.; Sen. Michelle Kidani; Sen. Donna Mercado Kim; Sen. Russell Kokubun; Sen. Clarence Nishihara; Sen. Norman Sakamoto; Sen. Sam Slom; Sen. Dwight Takamine; Sen. Brian Taniguchi; Sen. Jill Tokuda; Rep. Henry J.C. Aquino; Rep. Karen Awana; Rep. Della Belatti; Rep. Lyla B. Berg; Rep. Joe Bertram III; Rep. Tom Brower; Rep. Rida Cabanilla; Rep. Mele Carroll; Rep. Jerry Chang; Rep. Corinne Ching; Rep. Pono Chong; Rep. Isaac W. Choy; Rep. Denny Coffman; Rep. Cindy Evans; Rep. Lynn Finnegan; Rep. Faye Hanohano; Rep. Sharon Har; Rep. Robert Herkes; Rep. Ken Ito; Rep. Jon Karamatsu; Rep. Gilbert Keith-Agaran; Rep. Chris Kalani Lee; Rep. Marilyn Lee; Rep. Sylvia Luke; Rep. Michael Magaoay; Rep. Joey Manahan; Rep. Barbara Marumoto; Rep. Angus McKelvey; Rep. John Mizuno; Rep. Hermina Morita; Rep. Mark Nakashima; Rep. Scott Nishimoto; Rep. Blake Oshiro; Rep. Marcus Oshiro; Rep. Kymberly Pine; Rep. Karl Rhoads; Rep. Roland Sagum; Rep. Scott Saiki; Rep. Calvin Say; Rep. Maile Shimabukuro; Rep. Joseph Souki; Rep. K. Mark Takai; Rep. Roy Takumi; Rep. Cynthia Thielen; Rep. James Tokioka; Rep. Clifton K. Tsuji; Rep. Glenn Wakai; Rep. Gene Ward; Rep. Jessica Wooley; Rep. Ryan Yamane; Rep. Kyle Yamashita
Subject: furlough Fridays
Categories: Print Big Island

Dear Senators and Congressmen,

I am a Hawaii educator. I work at a Maui middle school. I am greatly concerned about the loss of instructional time due to furloughs. I propose, as suggested by some of the GOP representatives, a full audit, but not just of the DOE, of the entire state. I know that we have enough money for what we need. We just need to find it - and stop allowing it to be wasted without any accountability.

First, I am angry that the governor has refused to accept any responsibility for the furloughs. Furloughs were *her* idea. Her plan was to furlough ALL state workers - including teachers - for 36 days per year, or 3 days per month. Teachers' right to collective bargaining prevented this. She responded by cutting the DOE budget by the 14% that would have been saved by furloughing teachers for 36 days per year. Now she blames the union for choosing furloughs over our children.

I am so tired of hearing people say that if teachers really cared about our students, we would work more for less. I challenge you to find more than a small handful of teachers who don't give time beyond what they're paid and money out of their own pockets for their students. Teachers are busting their butts - and their wallets - for our keiki, and for this we get people who want us to do even more for even less. We love what we do. We care about our kids. The fact remains that this is still our livelihood. We still need to be able to pay our rent and put food on our tables. Other state officials were furloughed. They took a 5% pay cut and two furlough days per month. No one is telling them that if they "really" cared, they would suck up the pay cut and work anyway. Why is this expected of our teachers?

The HSTA felt that furloughs were inevitable, given the governor's apparent refusal to accept any contract proposal without them. Negotiators bargained for as few days as they could. The result was 17 furlough days this school year. The members of HSTA didn't APPROVE this contract. We ACCEPTED it. We felt that we didn't have any other choice. We were lead to believe that if we didn't accept this contract, our remaining options would be even worse.

AUDIT THE STATE and all departments and agencies who receive state funds. I want to know where my money is going. I want to know why we can't afford to properly fund education.

Help us get rid of poor teachers. While I appreciate the HSTA's efforts to protect its members from unfair treatment, I think getting a poor teacher fired is far too difficult. We need a rigorous evaluation process. That doesn't exist. A person should not be allowed to be fired at will, but a teacher should not be allowed to retain his or her position when he or she is incompetent.

Solutions are available that don't require further cuts to teacher salaries, mass random layoffs, or raiding our hurricane relief fund (which would be incredibly irresponsible and wouldn't solve the larger problem). I firmly believe that the money we need already exists in our budgets. It is just being mismanaged. Please AUDIT THE STATE, including the Department of Education. Education is too critical to our future - and our present.

Cyndi Gale
Kihei, Maui

Sen. Will Espero

From: dick tracy [mailto:dicktracy@hawaii2009@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, November 02, 2009 9:23 PM
To: All Reps; All Senators; BOE_Hawaii@notes.k12.hi.us
Subject: audit of teaching positions

Categories: Print Big Island

In response to an audit of Teachers in 'non-teaching' positions, :

Curriculum coordinators

Reading Coaches

Student services coordinator (SACs - may teach only 1 - 2 classes of student government students)

Counselors (i.e. college counselors)

School librarians (in certain schools, in some schools, librarians teach a full day)

Novatec - students take on-line courses for classes that they have failed. Many times, teachers only 'monitor' these students, but may not do any actual 'teaching.'

Perhaps these positions may take one or more actual classes with students.

Sen. Will Espero

From: Carol Naone [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 3:03 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: Furlough Fridays

Please find a way to reinstate instructional days. The HSTA should be willing to concede to using their non-instructional days as furlough days or renegotiate their contract for pay cuts instead of furloughs.

One of the basic problems of our educational system is the bureaucracy of our DOE. Look into decentralizing it. Another problem is having to negotiate with three different unions that each have their own agendas that may not benefit the educating of our children in a efficient, cohesive manner.

Raiding the hurricane fund or raising taxes at this time is not an option.

Mahalo for your attention to my concerns,

Mrs. Carol Naone
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sen. Will Espero

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 8:29 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: school furloughs

Categories: Print Big Island

Dear Senator,

Please abolish public school furloughs. Although I transferred my daughter to a private school after fall break, I realize there are many public school families who do not have the means to protect their children from such the disasterous decision to take 17 school days from our children. I would pay higher taxes to keep the schools open for public school students. I believe a good education is the right of every child. Please do the right thing.

Alana Steffen

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sen. Will Espero

From: Jennifer Arashiro [mailto:jarashiro@hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 8:50 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: Let's Provide Our Children With The Education They Deserve

Categories: Print Big Island

My husband and I are the parents of an 8th grader at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School in Līhu'e, Kaua'i. While our daughter has enjoyed "playing hooky" these last two furlough days, we are sure that boredom will soon set in as time goes. Public education in Hawai'i has been lacking for many years. Our teachers are overworked, under-staffed and under-paid. First and foremost, our children need a good solid education. We need to keep the public schools open.

The school furloughs are not only hurting our children, but eventually the entire State will suffer. I am a Victim/Witness Advocate with the Prosecutor's Office, and my experience has been that the juvenile crime rate soars and drug use increases when children are left to their own devices without any structure or discipline. While alternative programs may be a possibility for elementary-aged children, those in the middle and high schools will in all likelihood be left to care for themselves.

I feel that a slight increase to the General Excise Tax would help alleviate the fiscal shortfall. Everybody takes a little bit of the burden. Another possibility is to utilize the designated waiver days as instructional days. Some important and crucial decision-making is in the forecast for our lawmakers and public officials. I only ask that they think long and hard, and do what is right and fair for the future of our children.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Arashiro

[REDACTED]
Līhu'e, HI 96766

Sen. Will Espero

From: Darrell Schuetz [mailto:dschuetz@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 9:00 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: furlough Fridays

Please do everything in your power to make something happen to correct this abysmal situation. I know that we have a tight economical situation throughout the state, but in my personal opinion we have attempted to resolve it by hurting those who should not have been hurt: the children of Hawaii.

I am removed from this personally because I am a retired private school teacher, and my grandson is currently attending a different private school. However, I know a lot about education, having been a teacher for 49 years, and I am absolutely certain that the loss of 17 days will have a negative impact on the students. Every day in the already short school year is important. I think the almost universal feeling that something must NOW be done is indicative of the fact that many others believe so also. This "furlough Friday" approach simply is NOT right.

We know it, we see it, we feel it.

I find the Governor's "slip-sliding" on this one to be hard to accept. She put the screws to the unions and threatened them with layoffs if they did not act. They then acted, and now she says that this is not where things should have gone. Her leadership on this matter makes a statement on the value she places on education, and it's not good.

Mahalo for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Darrell Schuetz
Retired English teacher
Kamehameha Schools

Sen. Will Espero

From: Erin Smith (erinailoon@gmail.com)
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 10:40 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: Public School Furloughs

Dear Senator Espero-

I am writing this regarding the decision to furlough public schools for 17 days for this school year. I'm very concerned about this because I'm currently working in the special education system at Ma'ili Elementary in Waianae. I just moved to Hawai'i from Chicago and I have to say that thus far, its been great! The people are friendly and this state is absolutely beautiful.

Financial hardships have been widespread and obviously most states are struggling to adequately fund public programs and services. I understand that it is necessary to prioritize and reduce spending when money is tight, however, the recent action to close public schools on 17 instruction days is absolutely absurd, in my opinion. There are great, dedicated professionals who love working in the education system in Hawai'i. However, Hawai'i ranks near the bottom in public education nationally. Resources are lacking especially in the area of Oahu I work in, environments rich in language, literacy, and cultural experience are lacking. This is leaving Hawai'i's keiki at a disadvantage when competing with mainland educated peers for higher education and employment. The decision to furlough on instruction days is just escalating the disadvantages faced by the children of Hawai'i. Leaving them further and further behind the rest of the nation, and the world. The most vulnerable group of children being left behind are the children with disabilities- children who cannot advocate for themselves- who remain at increased risk for drug abuse, homelessness, and poverty for the rest of their lives BEFORE taking away an obscene amount of classroom and resource time.

The old saying, 'It takes a village to raise a child' comes to mind. But what message are we sending when the village chooses to neglect the child because money is tight? Hawaii is putting itself in a position to remain in the bottom rung of American education, perpetuate homelessness and drug abuse in the future. De valuing of public education is creating an environment of continuous failure and financial vulnerability. We need to make an environment that is sustainable and responsible in order to survive any future hardships. Future direction and long term consequences of the furloughs need to be considered over the short term budget issues.

I also think the the legal consequences of violating the Individual Education Plans of students with disabilities need to be considered. These legally binding documents are all in jeopardy now with the reduction of instruction time. Minutes and services outlined in the documents will not be able to be upheld- and the Department of Education faces federal prosecution by parents of all of these children- potentially costing the state money.

Please advocate for the restoration of instruction time and for the appropriate salaries for DOE employees. This state has so much to offer and short changing its children is not putting it in a position to succeed.

Sincerely,
Erin Smith

--
Erin Aileen Smith
M.S., CCC-SLP

They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.
- Carl W. Buechner

Sen. Will Espero

From: Frances Kathryn Pitzer [mailto:francesk@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 10:20 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: public testimony re teacher furloughs

Categories: Print Big Island

Aloha,

Reduction to student instructional hours should NOT be an option, and I implore you, as legislators, to not allow this to continue even one more month. This decision has reached an all-time low in Hawaiian politics. These children are already testing among the lowest in the nation. Hawaii is already struggling with its economy and unemployment, and a decision such as this will only add to the problem when these poorly-educated students hit the workforce. And let's not overlook the obvious: these students don't have voting power, so they've been targeted to take the brunt of the poor financial management and decision-making made - both past and present.

My suggested alternatives to teacher furloughs are (1) clean up the wasted tax dollars within the DOE, BOE, and State legislature (I can provide several examples from first hand experience, if anyone is interested), (2) Start at the TOP with pay & benefit reductions, from the Governor on down - LEAD BY EXAMPLE. Most of the people you represent have been affected by cutbacks, so why do you think you should be exempted from impact?, (3) Don't waste good money paying a restructuring company if you're going to disregard the value of education in your decision-making, as you've done in regard to teacher furloughs, (4) mandate that any legislators, DOE and BOE members have their keiki on PUBLIC rather than PRIVATE schools, so that they care about what happens within the public educational system; our 'ohana not making enough money to have their children in private schools deserve better than what's been happening within the public system, (5) legislate a State-based minimum number of student contact hours of instructional time each academic year so that choices such as this cannot be made ever again, and the students' education is removed from the political gamefield, (6) TEACHERS WERE HIRED BECAUSE STUDENTS NEED TO BE EDUCATED; WHEN THE STUDENTS ARE NO LONGER BEING EDUCATED BECAUSE THE TEACHERS HAVE JOBS (THAT ARE TOO COSTLY), SOMETHING IS WAY OFF TRACK!! Let's get the overall picture here!, (7) The educational system is BADLY BROKEN. FIX IT. In what other profession are the workers ensured jobs when missing stated objectives (the purpose for which they were hired!!) so consistently and abysmally?? Why is the Superintendent permitted to continue with this poor achievement record - it's not just the teachers! Take the money from No Child Left Behind and put it in another direction because the way it's structured right now there is NO INCENTIVE for some of these bad teachers to improve; there is however incentive for them to remain bad because NOW THEY CAN RECEIVE EXTRA MONEY THROUGH NCLB WHEN THEY TUTOR THE VERY CHILDREN THEY DID NOT TEACH WELL IN THE CLASSROOM. IT'S LUDICROUS! At the very least forbid the teachers whose classes aren't at or above the standards - across the board - from tutoring through this program.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Frances Pitzer

francesk@hawaii.edu
1001 HAWAII ROAD
HAWAII, HI 96719

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Sen. Will Espero

From: Debbie Schatz [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 10:19 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: Restore Fridays

Dear Senators and House Representatives, Hawaii is on the race to the bottom until we can get our children back in class. School buzz is...Students must be in school to test, or parents will decline HSA testing, parents are leaving the islands, public school system & military families are rejecting Hawaii. For short term goals of returning students to the classroom this school year HSA testing is throughout April. To restore class time Jan-April is in the children's best interest.

I recommend restoring the following Fridays at the very least January 15,29, February 5,12, March 5, 12, April 23 Please consider restoring Fridays. When schools convert non-instructional days, Fridays are not restored. Debbie Schatz

6th grade mom, Aikahi
Aikahi Elementary PTSA co-President
Hawaii Education Matters Volunteer

Sen. Will Espero

From: Vania Simmons [mailto:vaniasimmons1002@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 11:59 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: Solutions for Furlough

Categories: Print Big Island

Aloha Senator:

I am a concerned parent of 2 Autistic Boys that attend Elementary School here in Waialua.

When I first found out about the Furloughs I was very shocked!

I could not believe that it would actually happen until it did.

Cutting off 17 Fridays is not just hard on the parents but it is devastating for the children, especially children with special needs, that receive services, sometimes, on Fridays.

Also, kids in the Autism Spectrum need some kind of routine, and having a 3 day weekend breaks that routine tremendously.

I do understand that the budget cut in in order, so why not revise the furloughs into blocks, not chopped up all over the place. Maybe if you add a few days on Summer Vacation, Winter Vacation and even Spring break would make lives much easier for parents, students and teachers.

Parents can planned vacation ahead, Special Ed kids can still receive services, according to IEP and teachers would have a longer vacation to rest and be ready for the kids again!

So this is my suggestion. I hope that we can think of our kids and being our future! Not just the ones that are lucky enough to go to Private Schools, but everyone!

Mahalo for taking the time to read it.

Sincerely,

Vania Simmons

~~69-101 Waialua Beach~~

Waialua, HI 96791

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To: Senator Colleen Hanabusa, Senate President
Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair
Senator Will Espero, Vice Chair
Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair, Education Committee

From Lynn M. Soots

Date: 30 Oct 2009

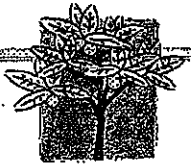
Subject: Support of Special Senate Committee to Consider Approaches to Teacher Furloughs

I am writing this testimony not only as dedicated educator and member of the Hawaii State PTSA member but a deeply concerned parent. I completely oppose a two-year ratified teacher contract that requires educators to take 17 or 21 unpaid furlough days off, and result in decreased instruction time.

I have been watching the actions of many key players concerning furlough Friday and it is quite apparent that it is becoming more about finger pointing over who should have done what and what people didn't do. I learned a great saying years back "When you point the finger, you have three pointing back at you. I know you have formed a special senate committee to address the issue and to look at what can be done in the immediate future; definitely a positive thing. But sometimes we neglect looking in other directions where we can find answers, we ask questions but we don't ask the right questions.

So how important is it for the public school system of Hawai'i to remain open on days marked as furlough days? What if we close the school for those days? What will the outcome be? I don't have crystal ball but if I look back to a few of my stats classes and rely on predictability of outcomes then here is what I see for Hawai'i in the future:

1. A drop in nutrition for kids who rely on the free meal programs- which leads to health and wellbeing issues not only with the child but the families. There is an added financial burden that will be place on them to either provide the food (which at poverty level is near to impossible), or rely on food banks more. Not to mention the direct results we know to be true that when nutrition is lacking, the ability to concentrate, focus and learn follows that downward trend- but what is one day a week?
2. Last Friday was a furlough day. At malls and public places there was increase of foot traffic that was easily recognizable. Who were those people? Not tourist, not financially OK families who could afford to pay for supplemental supervision. So my best guess it would be kids of families who did not have the ability to supplement- We have a huge population of "at risk" kids and according to the CDC and other national polls the outcomes for unsupervised kids and adolescents is not a positive one. So now we are putting a population of kids who need "us" most at even greater risk- but what is one day a week?
3. A good majority of nurturing happens in schools: resilience building, esteem building, altruism, social attitudes, hope, self efficacy to not a few. These are not only the foundations of a great education system but of a great person. We build great little people into great big people every day- but what is one day a week?



NORTH SHORE MEDICAL CENTER

Charlotte L. Hunter, MD
Family Medicine

Melinda Menezes, MD
Family Medicine

Thomas Capelli II, DO
Internal Medicine Osteopathic Medicine

Sally Jo Moore, PA-C
General Practice Dermatology

ATTN:
Senate Committee on Teacher Furloughs
State Capitol 12:30, October 30, 2009
FAX: 808-586-6659

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a Family Physician on the North Shore of Kauai. Furlough Fridays has me considering moving to a state that respects the need to educate her people.

I am looking at putting my children in private schools, but most people cannot afford that choice. And I, being a product of 20 years of public education, feel very upset about my children not having the time to learn the fundamentals because of not enough days in class. My son's 4th grade teacher has decided not to have spelling tests because there is not enough time.

As a woman physician, I have little girls that see me in the office and tell me that they want to grow up and be doctors. I want them to be able to serve their community. However, if you take a survey of doctors on Kauai, less than 10% have roots in Hawaii. Taking away school days is not going to allow our keiki to fulfill their potential.

Does Hawaii plan to continue to import her professionals and have an undiversified economy? Education is the best investment out there.

Respectfully,

Melinda Menezes, MD

2490 Oka Street Kilauea, Hawaii 96754 ph. 808.828.1418 fax 808.828.1666

Revised: See - We really do need spelling in school. m menezes



NORTH SHORE MEDICAL CENTER

Charlotte L. Hunter, MD
Family Medicine

Melinda Menezes, MD
Family Medicine

Thomas Capelli II, DO
Internal Medicine Osteopathic Medicine

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Respectfully,

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NORTH SHORE MEDICAL CENTER

October 30, 2009

ATTN:

Senate Committee on Teacher Furlough
State Capitol 12:30, October 30, 2009

FAX: 808-586-6659

Charlotte L. Hunter, MD
Family MedicineMelinda Menezes, MD
Family MedicineThomas Capelli II, DO
Internal Medicine · Osteopathic MedicineSally Jo Moore, PA-C
General Practice · Dermatology

To Whom It May Concern:

Furlough Fridays are extremely disruptive to a regimen of regular schooling; I believe my son's education has been severely compromised because of this. Children require regular schedules in order to develop good study habits and also need the time for socialization and development.

Thank you for your consideration,
Charlotte L. Hunter MD

From: Robin Polhemus [mailto:rpolhemus@hawaii.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, November 04, 2009 9:02 AM
To: All Senators
Subject: Furlough Fridays

Dear Senators of Hawaii,

Let me start by saying that those of you who are willing to go back to the table to renegotiate teacher furloughs are to be commended. Your efforts regarding this matter are honorable and very much appreciated. You understand the importance of an education and the risks of having an uneducated society.

To those of you who are not onboard with renegotiation, it makes one wonder if you or your children are the products of a public education here in Hawaii. If you were in public school now, how would you feel knowing that you are getting less of an education than **every** other state in America? How would you feel if the people you trusted in government to make decisions about your future decided you were not important enough to educate? Unfortunately, those of you who cannot see that the choices you make affect those who cannot make their own choices - the children - are in this voter's opinion, selfish and short sighted.

For many parents, home schooling or private education is not an option, it is a luxury that they cannot afford. In most households there are two income earners. Some parents hold down more than one job. Now, with the teacher furloughs, their lives are more expensive, frustrating and complicated. Not only are parents scrambling to fill the void in their children's education but the teachers are also having to fill the void in their pay, by taking on second jobs. Under the original contract, teachers are unable to teach or have any contact with students, other teachers, or school staff during furlough days. Contact includes but is not limited to telephone calls, e-mails and FAXs. Teachers and staff are not allowed to be on campus during the furlough days. No exceptions!

Presumably all people who live and work in Hawaii pay taxes. Don't some of those taxes go toward education? If so, where is the money going? Most states who have good public schools spend far more of their taxes on education than Hawaii does. Has it ever occurred to anyone that the public would not have to shell out so much money for private schools if our public education system was better? When I moved here over thirty years ago I entered the public school system. After one semester in Hawaii's public schools my parents pulled me out and sent me to a private school (because I begged). I can only imagine their shock at the state of the public school I attended. My experience in public school here in Hawaii was horrific, and I swore that I would never subject my children to what I had gone through. And yet, here they are in public school in Hawaii trying to make the best of it. My husband, a product of a mainland public school system, is a great supporter of public schools everywhere. It is his opinion that if people do not support the public school system and work from within to improve it, then it will never get better. What truly matters is a dedication to learning coupled with supportive parents and teachers. But now, with students in school such a short time each year, parents overextended, and teachers furloughed, all the odds are stacked against the public schools. As a result, Hawaii's children lose. I appalled that Hawaii's governmental and educational leaders are leading Hawaii's children to mediocrity if not abject failure. This is not what you were elected to do. You have to believe

in public education to make it work. I believe that if all of us - the DOE, BOE, Senators, Representatives, Administrators, educational staff, and parents - work together, we can make public education viable, so that Hawaii's schools and children can succeed

While I do not expect the furlough situation to end immediately, I have great hope that all of you will find it in your hearts and minds to renegotiate the current contract, end the ill-conceived expedient of furlough days, and provide a better situation for everyone concerned. Maybe someday Hawaii will be on the leading edge of education in the nation. Until then, I will fight for Hawaii's children. After all, they are our future.

Concerned parent,

Robin Polhemu

~~11121 11121 11121~~

Kailua, HI 96734

From: roni williams [mailto:~~roni.williams@hawaiiantel.net~~]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 6:18 PM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: teacher's furloughs

Our children are our future. We need to invest more in their education rather than take even more days away from them by having furlough fridays. It's appalling to watch how little our government values education. We need to reinstate physical education, the arts and advanced classes for our children. Bring back the pride in completing an education and encourage advancement. The Parks and Recreation Department needs to sweep its programs too so children have a place to go after school and on weekends to let off steam and improve their physical being. Sports instill teamwork and personal advancement. Obesity, drug use, vandalism, teenage pregnancy and so much more can be lessened if not curtailed by investing more in our children from the very beginning rather than spending the money later on health care, rehab, welfare and prisons. If we don't make education important how can we expect our children to think it is important? Stop the furloughs. More days in school with quality curriculums should be our goal.

Thank you!
Roni Williams
~~12-2508 Luana St.~~
Pahoa, HI 96778

Sen. Will Espero

From: Ted Jaderstrom [mailto:ted.jaderstrom@hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 8:52 PM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: Furlough days

Categories: Print Big Island

I am a public school teacher and I pay my taxes. I have been hearing that one of the major reasons that the state is in its current financial predicament is because revenues from tax collections is down. I pay my taxes. why is the burden of the state's financial problems being imposed on the state workers. There are many other people who live and work in this state. Why is the burden not being shared with everyone? There needs to be a tax hike or additional tax to deal with the deficit so that everyone gets fair treatment. Raising taxes or adding taxes is not popular. The state workers are only a small percentage of the voting public. Are the elected officials who refuse to consider a tax adjustment to reduce the deficit speculating that better to pick on a small group of voters than the whole because if they lose the state employee's votes, they will still have enough votes from everyone else to get them reelected? Are the state workers to be sacrificed? I pay my taxes, and now most of Hawaii's elected officials wants to add insult to injury by cutting my pay, and at the sake of depriving Hawaii's children of 17 days of school. Isn't it very likely that many teachers will leave the public schools and that the number of people pursuing a career to teach in Hawaii's schools will be considerably reduced? What will happen to the state employees who recently purchased a home for their maximum mortgage amount? How will they pay their mortgage? Will they need to foreclose? Or the state employees who were barely making ends meet? Will they go bankrupt? And those who would like to buy a home. Are the lending institutions going to be reluctant to extent credit to these people? Getting back to Hawaii's Children. If a parent chose to keep their child out of school for more than 10 days, the parent could be taken to court for educational neglect. Now it's legal to keep them out for 17 days. Sounds like a double standard. How much confidence will the public have in Hawaii's public school system after this furlough fiasco? It's time to raise or add taxes now. Don't be a bully to the state employees. We pay our taxes, we do our part. Let everyone pitch in.

Sen. Will Espero

From: Connie Buecker [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 8:04 PM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: OCTOBER 30TH HEARING TESTIMONY

Categories: Print Big Island

To Whom It May Concern,

My family and I moved to Hawaii about 1.5 years ago on Navy orders. We were excited about moving to paradise, but greatly concerned about the public schools. We are very fortunate to be able to afford to send our 2 young children to Navy Hale Keiki school. Unfortunately not everyone can afford to do that.

I was sad and flabbergasted when I learned about the proposed and passed furlough days for Hawaii's public schools. I was shocked that it did not make national news.

I strongly support a special session to find a solution to furlough days for public school students. I feel it is vital that all parties come together and resolve this situation which has resulted in Hawaii's children having the shortest time in school in the nation.

Compromising our children's education is not an option, because ignorance costs far more than education.

I would ask that you consider public opinion, which is reaching an unprecedented level of concern over Hawaii's children being the most poorly educated in the nation.

Sincerely,

Connie Buecker

[redacted]
Aiea, HI 96701

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Sen. Will Espero

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 8:12 PM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Cc: gpa@hawaii.rr.com

Categories: Print Big Island

Dear Senator Espero,

I am writting to you to voice my opinion about furlough Fridays. I think it is border line criminal. It is neglect! The DOE and the politicians of Hawaii need to be held accountable for neglecting the children of Hawaii. When did everyone forget what it is all about....the children. When we say that everything we do is all about the kids, actions speak louder than words. Furlough Friday"s did not think about the kids, it was a decision that was soley about money.

We already have the lowest test scores out of all the states, and what will 17 fewer days do to that?? What the heck are our tax dollars for if not to provide a good education to our kids? I honestly think it should be the last cut made, not one of the first. Let everyone burn their own garbage in their back yards, stop paving the streets, hold off on all the "going green projects",everything else can wait! You need to focus, children and a good education first! It's crazy that these words even need to be said...children first! We are watching and waiting to vote again!! Represent the innocent, and represent their parents too! We the parents of Hawaii will not accept sub-standard conditions for our children, we demand the BEST education possiable!

Aloha,
Gina Alcos [REDACTED]

Sen. Will Espero

From: Debbie Berger [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, November 04, 2009 6:08 PM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: Testimony for Solutions to Furlough Friday
Attachments: 091103 FF letter to Leg.doc

Dear Senator Espero,

Thank you and President Hanabusa for allowing the public to submit testimony to the committee to consider approaches to teacher furloughs. Mine is attached.

After speaking with many of the stakeholders in this crisis, I have come to the conclusion that much of this problem could be solved through strong leadership, creative problem-solving, shared credit, and only a little money. Given the economic circumstances of this year and next, I understand the reluctance of Leadership to come forward to offer a financial solution. In fact, I do not believe this would result in best possible out come for the State. However, all parties need to have a stake in the solution and this issue gives us the opportunity to work together toward a common goal.

If you like to discuss these ideas further, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you.

With Aloha,
Debbie

Sen. Will Espero

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 3:49 PM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: furlough fridays

To whom it may concern,

I am a concerned parent of two elementary school aged children and also a paraprofessional tutor at their elementary school. I am totally against having furlough fridays not because I'll be out of work for the day but because we are taking away from our children something that is so precious and valuable: EDUCATION. It's sad to know that Hawaii ranks among the lowest in the nation when it comes to education and this just adds frosting to an already lopsided cake(so to speak).

Here are a few suggestions that I have, I don't know if they were already considered but here they are:

1. make teachers come in on furlough days and work for free. instead of laying off people.
2. take the % needed for the budget from admin. if you pool all the principals and vice principals and take 4 or 5% of their pay over time it'll be peanuts taken out versus continually cutting teachers pay.
3. close school offices during breaks: why do the offices need to be open every day and why does the admin have to be there? either close half days or open couple days a week.
4. take furloughs on pc days or stop getting paid holidays.
5. raise taxes, I'd much rather pay higher taxes than take away another school instruction day.
6. consider gambling, either lottery, boat casino's or on kahoolawe.
7. use the transit money, why are we still going ahead with that when the state is in an economic crisis. we have the bus system we don't need another useless thing.

I really hope we can find a solution other than furlough fridays.

sincerely,
S.M.
5.

**PETITION TO CONVENE A SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE TO
RESTORE TEACHING DAYS**

We, the undersigned residents of the State of Hawaii, believe that the education of Hawaii's children is one of the most important priorities for the State of Hawaii. We request that Governor Linda Lingle and the Hawaii State Legislature restore any teaching days that will be lost due to the planned furloughing of teachers and other Department of Education personnel. We are in favor of convening a Special Session of the Hawaii State Legislature to explore a variety of options to accomplish this goal, including using the Hurricane Relief Fund, raising the general excise tax, or other alternate means, if necessary, to restore these teaching days this 2009-2010 school year.

Name Addr

<u>Sharon Len Goodwin</u>	<u>Sharon Len</u>
<u>Fred Dente</u>	<u>Fred Dente P.O. Box</u>
<u>Brad Parsons</u>	<u>Brad</u>
<u>MARY DENTE</u>	<u>Mary Dente</u>
<u>Danny Hashimoto</u>	
<u>Janet Ashkenazy</u>	
<u>KEN TAYLOR</u>	<u>1720</u>
<u>Janos Samu</u>	
<u>John J. Zapp</u>	
<u>Bronetia C</u>	
<u>Juanita Rojas</u>	
<u>Nancy John</u>	
<u>Cyrila Pycha</u>	<u>P.O.</u>
<u>J. Hunter</u>	<u>?</u>

Please mail petitions to Katie Ve
vercellix2@aol.com by October

at

PETITION TO CONVENE A SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE TO
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Name

Address (e-mail address)

DONAVAN GARDNER

Daniel Rangel

JANNA DOUGLAS 4

Jamie Rawlins

Bruno Ewald 54420

Cody Woods

MIKE STEWART

MIKE KENNEY

GABRIELA HERBURN

Miguel Martinez

Basil Gardner

Please mail petitions to Katie Vercelli at ~~6424 Mahalo Street, Kapaa, HI 96746~~ or email her at vercellix2@aol.com by October 23, 2009. Mahalo for your support!

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OF THE HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE TO
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Name

Address /e-mail address

Michael P. Amelin
Quinn O'Brien
Michael
Aimo Perry
Kahalealani Clark
MARIA TAPAY
William Smith
Regina Kichara
Cornie Neseath
Malia Nyl

Please mail petitions to Katie Vercelli at ~~5424 Makolea Street, Kapa'a~~, HI 96746 or email her at vercellix2@aol.com by **October 23, 2009**. Mahalo for your support!

**PETITION TO CONVENE A SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE TO
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Name

Address

Greg Nakashima 95-141

Francine Dizol

Shantell Lay 7

Chelsea Cabral

Mami Kelekorua

Lorna Lopes F

Melissa Gregory 197

Judy Roberts D

JANET LEOPOLD

il.com
ii.rr.com
j.org
Hog.09

Please mail petitions to Katie Vercelli at ~~5424 Makalapa Street~~, Kapa'a, HI 96746 or email her at vercellix2@aol.com by **October 23, 2009**. Mahalo for your support!

Sen. Will Espero

From: Seagem Fix [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, November 05, 2009 11:21 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Cc: Seagem McNamara
Subject: FURLOUGH FRIDAYS

My name is Seagem Fix McNamara and I live at [redacted] in Hawaii Kai. I don't know my district.

I am against furlough Fridays. It is horrible how the parents were not involved with the decision process. And they way that they cut into the weeks for every Friday. Why? It makes it more inconvenient to have about each Friday to scramble for help. They could have just ended school early and then we can figure it out as parents with advance notice what we want to do with all these extra days. And or cut out other programs and or have fundraisers and leave it up to that particular school.

And to shorten the school days makes it harder for kids to learn and teachers to get their material to the students. And to do it in the middle of a school year is shameful..

I am a mother of 4 kids. 3 of them attend public school. 2 at Niu Valley Middle School and 1 at Kaiser High School.

Mahalo Nui Loa,
Seagem Fix McNamara

From: nancy [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 05, 2009 1:29 PM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: NO FURLOUGHS/NO LAYOFFS

Hello Senator,

Just letting you know my family which includes a 3rd grader and 5th grader at Haiku Elementary school OPPOSE LAYOFFS AND FURLOUGHS!! I am sure you have all the reasons. Mainly I want to know WHERE DID THE STIMULUS MONEY GO???? I was under the impression that the money was to help keep school open. So right now I am thinking the state stole this money from the kids!!!! And from the teachers! How shameful.

Get to work and fix this please ASAP!!!

Nancy

Sen. Will Espero

From: Karen Stokely [mailto:kstokely@hawaii.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, November 04, 2009 11:00 AM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: Hawai'i needs strong education for all of the people of Hawai'i

Categories: Print Big Island

Aloha,

Please do anything possible to create the strongest education possible for the children of Hawai'i. Failing Hawai'i's children is the worst possible harm we can do the the indigenous people of this beautiful land. History will show either the decay of this civilization or the lifting of the people into a great society and the education available for these children will make all of the difference. Let us not experiment with this generation for we know that making the greatest resources available to them will create opportunities that will lift us out of poverty and the horrible results of a neglected culture.

Mahalo,
Karen Stokely
96712

Sen. Will Espero

From: M J [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 05, 2009 6:31 PM
To: Sen. Will Espero
Subject: furloughs

Sen. Espero,

I tried to write to the gov. office a long time ago about the furlough and state budget crisis. Of course I got no response. That is why I like you and your office, you actually take the time to write back. Well these no school fridays and teachers forced lay offs has to go now. The teachers are the leaders of today educating the leaders of tomorrow. They are under paid and under appreciated as is. When you give students days off, what do you expect them to do? What do you expect the parents to do? More kids out on the street unsupervised more days out of the year. These longer weekends add to the partying, smoking weed, street racing, vandalism and the long list goes on. Make budget cuts elsewhere. Everyone is affected when teachers and students are off. Don't offer a 5% decrease in pay to the teachers. Like I already said, they are under paid. Find other places to make cuts and decrease prices or eliminate all sales tax for the next 3 months to increase the holiday shopping. The one group of people that never feel the hardships of the economy are prisoners. They don't do anything to make the community better, yet they get 3 hots and a cot and free medical, dental, visual, and everything FREE. I work three jobs and I don't even get dental. Make your cuts from prisoners, not workers. Let's round off low numbers. Say you have 6000 prisoners on island. Give them only 2 meals a day, like you do hard working paying college students. Let's say each meal is 2 dollars. Right away you save \$12000 plus utilities that are wasted feeding them 3 meals. When I was in college living in the dorm, I only got two meals a day and I paid thousands. If I wanted another meal, I had to pay out of pocket. Why should prisoners have it better, make them pay for their third meal or snack. These number are low, but I know we could save at least \$4,380,000. That is not even counting the youth detention homes and the state hospitals. You know we could save close to \$10,000,000 if we wanted to. You make jails so nice, why get a job when you can do whatever you like and still get free EVERYTHING. I have a lot more ideas I will probably throw at you this weekend. Thank you for your time.

Matt



**STATE OF HAWAII
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

P. O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Special Senate Hearing: Education Furlough

Hearing on Friday, October 30, 2009
12:30 pm in Capitol Auditorium

Testimony in Strong Support of Full Funding for Public Education

Senator Espero:

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony as an individual Member of the Hawaii State Board of Education (Board).

Education is a service. Whether it's a public school or a private school, education is a service. Teachers are the service providers. The funding cuts and restrictions to our public education budget to date have resulted in services being cut.


As the cuts and restrictions began a year ago, the Board did what it could to not allow the instructional time to be affected. In fact, just before we began contract negotiations the Department and the Board affirmed our desire to preserve instructional days and increase funding to the schools. For instance, we moved over \$20 million from DOE special program funds, including some athletics monies, into the Weighted Student Formula pot so that each school could be allocated a larger amount per student. [For many years now, the Board has funded the weighted student formula beyond the percentage mandated in Act 51. Why would we willingly undue all that work?]

However, more and more cuts and restrictions kept coming. Facing cut after cut, restriction after restriction, the Board's refusal to cut instructional days, made the governor and other decision makers think they were not cutting public education enough. Just when we thought we would get relief from the ARRA federal stimulus money, we were preemptively struck by more cuts and restrictions.

It's like a kid in a playground refusing to cry "uncle" when being pushed around, so the bully pushes harder. Well, I think we are hearing the kids in the playground screaming "uncle!" We are hearing families screaming "uncle!". We are hearing citizens who don't even have children in public schools screaming "uncle!".

Please stop cutting public education funding from the budget. Please help us to persuade the Lingle-Aiona Administration to stop imposing additional restrictions. Please raise the state funds needed deliver the service of educating our children. The legislature raised the GET by 0.5% to invest in rail. The education of our children must be valued as much as a mass transit system - if not more.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



Kim Coco Iwamoto, Esq.