

SB 1617

Date of Hearing: February 6, 2009

Committee: Senate Education and Housing

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. 1617 Making an Appropriation to Assist Geographically Isolated Schools under the Weighted Student Formula

Purpose: Appropriates funds for FY2009-2010 for school-based budgeting (EDN 100) as an additional amount for travel and associated costs to assist students of geographically isolated schools to explore academic enhancement.

Department's Position: The Department **opposes SB1617**. The Department recognizes the wisdom of the 2004 Hawaii State Legislature in passing Act 51 which provided for the Committee on Weights to recommend and the Board of Education to adopt the relative additional funding to schools based on student characteristics. Should additional funds be available to support schools that does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2009-2010 and the Executive releases the appropriation, the Department would propose adding the additional funds to the Weighted Student Formula for distribution in accordance with Board of Education decision-making.



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND HOUSING

RE: SB 1617 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO ASSIST
GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED SCHOOLS UNDER THE WEIGHTED
STUDENT FORMULA.

February 6, 2009

ROGER TAKABAYASHI, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) **supports SB 1617**, which appropriates funds for FY 2009-2010 for school-based budgeting for travel and associated costs to assist students of geographically isolated (GI) schools to explore academic enhancement by adding such funds as an additional amount to the weighted student formula.

Students attending geographically isolated schools lack privileges afforded to students who attend urban and non-geographically isolated schools. GI schools are significantly less likely to be located in an area where resources for supplementary academic activities or programs are easily accessible. Therefore, the school bears the burden of higher costs associated with transporting students across long distances to access these resources. This burden ultimately decreases funds going to classrooms and other basic educational services, resulting in a direct negative affect on students.

HSTA believes the additional appropriation for geographically isolated schools, to be added to the existing weighted student formula (WSF), will benefit the students who attend these schools. To ensure that the additional funds are allocated correctly, the weight of a geographically isolated student needs to be changed. The weight of a GI student should be different from a regular student who is given a weight of 1. Therefore, the current weight for a GI student should be increased in order to generate the additional funds.

We urge the committee to pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.