

SB 1618

Date of Hearing: February 6, 2009

Committee: Senate Education and Housing

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. No. 1618, Relating to School Community Councils

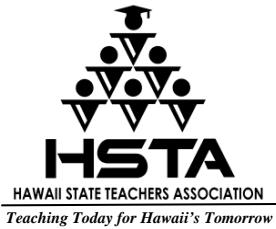
Purpose: Requires the Superintendent of Education, under policies established by the Board of Education, to conduct all elections for school community councils.

Department's Position: The Department of Education **does not support S.B. No.1618.** Currently, Section 302A-1124, Hawaii Revised Statutes, mandate to initiate school community councils, allows each school community council to establish policies governing the council's composition, election, staggered terms of office for members, operation, and vacancies provided that each school community council adheres to the provisions as stated in this section. Each school community council develops bylaws providing the framework from which the council operates. All schools are required to hold elections including nominations, voting, and announcement of elected members using the guidelines in their bylaws. The principal is responsible for providing oversight of the election process ensuring that the elections are conducted in accordance with school guidelines and democratic principles, and that fairness and integrity of the democratic process is

maintained. The Department, with the passing of Act 51, continues to move towards allowing each school to make decisions based on its unique school and community needs.

Rather, the election process should remain as intended by Act 51 allowing each school community council to establish policies governing their council's operations provided that each school community council adheres to the provisions in the law.

Thus, the Department does not feel that conducting the election of members to a school community council should be regulated under policies established by the Board of Education.



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## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING

RE: SB 1618 – RELATING TO SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCILS.

February 6, 2009

ROGER TAKABAYASHI, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) **opposes SB 1618**, which requires the Superintendent of Education, under policies established by the Board of Education, to regulate and conduct all elections for school community councils (SCC).

Since School Year 2005-06, HSTA has been conducting the elections of the teacher representatives to an SCC. This election is conducted concurrently with elections for HSTA school level representatives. HSTA has strict guidelines to ensure a fair election for teacher representatives to an SCC. These guidelines are as follows:

1. Notifications sent to teachers of the election.
2. Open nominations.
3. Secret ballot.
4. A process for challenging elections conducted by the state.

Holding both SCC and HSTA school level elections concurrently is more efficient than assigning this burden to the principal of the school.

In light of these reasons and considering the state of our already overburdened teachers, HSTA recommends keeping the SCC teacher representative elections at the status quo.

We urge the committee to exclude the election of the SCC teacher representative from this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.