



SB 2350

STATE OF HAWAII
BOARD OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

LATE TESTIMONY

February 07, 2010

The Honorable Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Committee on Education
Senate of Hawaii
415 South Beretania Street

To Chair Sakamoto and Esteemed members of Senate Education Committee:

Aloha, I am Kelly Maeshiro, current student member of the state Board of Education (BOE). I would like to lend my strong support for student member voting rights. Thought it may seem my interests are conflicted, I will never personally benefit from the necessary constitutional changes, unless of course one day, my own children are represented by a voting student member.

I understand the very valid concerns and reservations you might have about granting the student member voting rights. I understand that the student will be subject to heavy political pressures. I do not accept, however, that the student member is unqualified. The history and record of my predecessors speaks for itself. Further, the Hawaii State Student Council, by screening candidates, *ensures* that they are qualified.

During a time of such great political turmoil, it behooves all of us to remind the students how much they mean to us, and how seriously we consider their concerns. They need to know what we know: that their concerns are not falling upon deaf ears. Granting the BOE student member voting privileges acknowledges just that.

My statement of support doesn't stand on its own. Understanding the meaningful, insightful, and contributory work of student members past, the Board also supports our cause.

Let's not ignore the facts: student member voting rights has been a cardinal issue of students for over twenty years now, and from what I know, many support this measure. It shocks me, to say the least, that a measure with such an intensity and quantity of support has not been passed yet. If issues arise, I ask you to

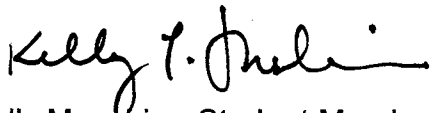
compromise and resolve them, but please do not forget the meaning of student member voting rights for the students. Do not give up on something so very important to our *keiki*.

My great challenge then, is not to convince you why student member voting rights is important, per se: you have heard these statements for twenty years. Rather, my challenge is simply to *remind* you that voting rights is still as important now as it was to us twenty years ago. The firestorm of student support is still well alive and burning strongly, evident every year at the Secondary Student Conference.

It's easy to understand how students feel when they are told to ask themselves what they can do for the state while at the same time, are denied adequate representation in its governance. Sure, not all students pay taxes, and none are old enough to die for our great country, but the issues that *directly* affect them are addressed without enough regard to their concerns. So while on the one hand, we uphold the principles of one-man-one-vote, we, in doing so, neglect the ideal of self-representation, and the self-evident truth that all people deserve a voice in their own governance.

We teach civics in high school. Now, let's give the students a real *civic* education. History remembers those great men and women who stuck their necks out for those who wanted a better future but didn't have the *power* to make that happen. You legislators hold all that power right now, and all that responsibility. I trust you all will exercise that power for the attainment of a noble cause. Student member voting rights is long overdue. When you cast your vote *aye* or *nay*, remember the *keiki*. Thank you for your earnest consideration. I truly hope you will support this measure.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly T. Maeshiro". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "K" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Kelly Maeshiro, Student Member
Hawaii State Board of Education

SB2350

LATE TESTIMONY



**HAWAII STATE
STUDENT COUNCIL**

475 22ND AVENUE, RM.211
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96816
<http://hssc.webs.com>

February 07, 2010

The Honorable Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Committee on Education
Senate of Hawaii
415 South Beretania Street

To Chair Sakamoto and Esteemed members of Senate Education Committee:


Aloha! The Hawaii State Student Council continues to extend its full support of voting rights for the student member of the Hawaii State Board of Education (Board). We thank you legislators for your support thus far and ask for its continuance.


As you know, student member voting rights has been a cardinal issue of the students, and thus the Council for over twenty years now. The students believe as we do, that the student member has an ethical, if not legal right, to voting powers. Although the voting rights may disregard the discipline of one-man-one-vote, it upholds the old, American revolutionary idea of self-representation. We believe in the sovereignty of the students' voices in their own governance.


History and example have shown us that student members past and present have been qualified and continue to be qualified, not by chance, but because the Hawaii State Student Council *ensures* qualified student Board members. Furthermore, the Office of the Attorney General has stricken down arguments of legality: liability, one-man-one-vote, etc.


The Council realizes that at this point, the issue is not so much convincing you of its significance to us, but of its urgency. We feel that voting rights, with all the support it receives from the students, the Board, and legislators, is long overdue. Therefore, we ask not only that this issue remain an important one to you, but also that it become urgent. A right is not something that can ethically be held off, and we sincerely hope you believe this too.

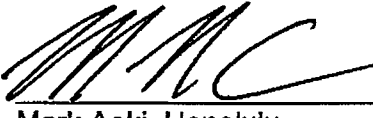
Hawaii State Student Council members,

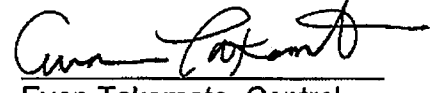

Jessica Minick, Chair


Marissa Catalano, Vice
Chair

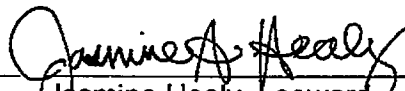

Nadia Khaddar, Secretary

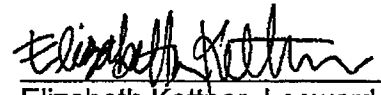

Kelly Maeshiro, Board of
Education Student Member



Mark Aoki, Honolulu
District


Evan Takemoto, Central
District



Nicole Manzano, Central
District

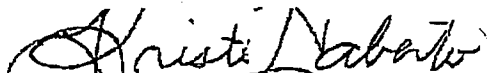

Jasmine Healy, Leeward
District



Elizabeth Kettner, Leeward
District


Mark Dainoff, Leeward
District


Kacey Kim, Hawaii District


Benjamin Lockyer, Maui
District


Kristi Caberto, Maui District


Bronsen Hiraoka, Kauai
District

LATE TESTIMONY

February 8, 2010

To: Chair Norman Sakamoto
Vice Chair Michelle Kidani

From: Brenda Steel

Subject: Support Senate Bill 2350, Partial Voting Rights for the Board of Education Student member

Hello my name is Brenda Steel. I am the Senior Chair of the Associated Students of Kalaheo High School. Please support SB2350 regarding and amendment to the Hawaii Constitution for partial voting rights for the Board of Education student member.

The Board of Education Student member should be able to vote because he experiences the trials and challenges in school every day. Even partial voting rights would be okay. This gives the students a chance to voice their opinion through their student representative.

The Student Board Member is the only board member who is in the schools, everyday and understands fully the implications of Board policy on individual students. Furthermore the student member works with the Hawaii State Student Council to gain greater insight into the issues. The BOE student member can also give input on situations that other BOE members wouldn't know about or don't know about.

In closing please support giving the Student Board of Education member partial or full voting rights to help involve student opinions. I urge you to amend the Hawaii Constitution to make this change. Thank you for your time{:

LATE TESTIMONY

February 8, 2010

To : Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Education and Housing Committee

From: Shelly Yoshimura

Subject: Support of SB 2350, Voting Rights for the Board of Education Member

Aloha! My name is Shelly Yoshimura, I am currently a Junior at Kalaheo High School. I strongly believe in SB 2350, and I would like to ask for your support. SB 2350 is asking to allow the Student Board of Education member to be a voting member. I believe this bill should pass because there are 15% of people that can't vote because they are students. If the bill passes the student representative we will be able to have a voice for all students.

I believe it is a positive thing to have a student on the BOE, Board because they spend each day in school and they know what is going on in school. They will also go to different schools to get feedback ideas from other students in verities of schools. I have learned that some other states give the right to let students vote in BOE. I have not heard of a law that does not allow students at meetings to be on the board. When the students voted to have a BOE student member there vote will count and the students were strongly agreeing to have one so they can be heard during the BOE meetings. Majority of the BOE support partial voting rights. I believe we should have full voting rights.

Thank you so much for taking your time and consideration, I hope that you will support Senate Bill 2350.

sakamoto2 - Erin

From: Nicole Scott [nicolieexoxo@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2010 10:12 AM
To: Sen. Norman Sakamoto; Sen. Michelle Kidani; Sen. Suzanne Chun
Oakland; Sen. Brickwood Galuteria; sensutsui@capitol.hawaii.gov; Sen.
Fred Hemmings
Cc: Richard Lau
Subject: concerning support of SB2350

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Education and Housing Committee

From: Nicole Scott, Kalaheo High School

Subject: Support of SB2350

Hi, my name is Nicole Scott and I am currently a sophomore at Kalaheo High School. I am in complete favor of SB2350, partial voting rights for the Board of Education's student member. I attended the Secondary Student Conference (SSC) where for the last 20 years, students have introduced resolutions for voting rights for the BOE members. It is something the students obviously want and have been trying to pass, the last Kids Voting Survey 2008 showed 79% of students from kindergarten to grade 12 are in favor, but we need the support.

As of now the BOE student member attends all meetings, participates in discussions, and has all the responsibilities any of the other BOE members have, but what he doesn't have is a vote. This student member knows how the BOE's decisions affect the students, because as a student the member is also directly affected. Why is it right that the students don't get a vote? The member chosen is qualified and has some of the highest standards; we are not putting an uneducated member on the board. Many of the adult board members even claim to be impressed with the work and insight the student member will provide. We have chosen someone to represent us on the board; we should have a vote on the board as well.

I realize the student member does have the right to speak and voice his opinion but a vote would actually count for something and have an impact on the decisions that are made. I believe that the public would agree and should have the right to state their opinion and vote on this bill. Other states such as Tennessee, California, and Vermont already have given their BOE student member rights to vote, it has been done before so why not here in Hawaii? It would help tremendously to have a final say in what will directly affect me and my fellow students.

Thank you for your time and consideration of supporting SB2350.

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Education and Housing Committee

From: Carrae Allen, Kalaheo High School

Subject: Support of SB 2350

Hello my name is Carrae Allen, and I am a sophomore at Kalaheo High School. I strongly support and believe in SB2350, and I'm asking for your support in this important situation. Self-representation is a democratic ideal - a government for of, and by the people, which in this case are the students. Hawaii public school students represent 15% of the state's population yet have no vote. Student Members have proven to be qualified: the Hawaii State Student Council assures qualification through high standards of selection. No other Board Member positions go through the same or comparable process. Student Members have all the same rights except for voting, and it's not fair.

The Student Member directly represents the students, whom are directly affected by Board policies. He/she is a direct link between the students and the state. The Student Member is the only Board Member who is in the schools, everyday and understands fully the implications of Board policy on individual students. Furthermore the student member works with the Hawaii State Student Council to gain greater insight into issues. Therefore the Student Member has much further knowledge about the student's views than the other Board members.

The Student Member is elected on a nonpartisan basis: we believe politics should not play a part in education. We believe in keeping decision making closest to those whom are most directly affected by those decisions. The students deserve a voice in their own education and welfare.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my opinion.

LATE TESTIMONY

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Education and Housing

From: Wren Fukada

Subject: Support of Senate Bill 2350 Student Member Voting Rights

Aloha, My name is Wren Fukada, I'm a part of Kalaheo High School Student Government. I strongly support SB 2350, relating that student member has all of the duties as of the other members however the student member does not have voting rights.

The student member directly represents all high school students, whom are directly affected by the boards decisions about polices. The student member is the voice and the direct link between students and the state of Hawaii. Other states such as California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Tennessee and Vermont have either granted full or partial rights towards there student member. I believe in keeping to whom it may affect the most the closet to making these decisions. The students should be able to have a say in their own education and welfare.

In supporting this bill Hawaii students will have a voice in the student member. Thus we will have a voice in voting. I hope that the committee passes SB 2350 and support changing the Hawaii constitution to allow partial voting rights, thank you for listening.

LATE TESTIMONY

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Committee on Education and Housing

From: Elizabeth Gray

Date: Saturday, February 06, 2010

Subject: Support of SB2350, relating to BOE student member voting rights

Hi my name is Elizabeth Gray and I am a senior at Kalaheo High School. I am also enrolled in Kalaheo's student council. I strongly support SB2350 because I believe that it will impact our education positively. Allowing student member voting rights will allow 15% of our states population (public school students) to have a say. The student member is the direct link between the students and the state. By allowing him to have voting rights you are also allowing the students to have a say in some policies that affect our education.

I believe that the students should be allowed a firm voice in policy making by the board. By allowing our student member to have voting rights we are able to speak through him so you get our opinions on certain matters. i believe that when making a decision about a certain group of people that certain group should be able to have a say in the decisions that will be affecting their lives. Students deserve a voice in their own education and welfare.

Passing SB2350 will have a tremendous positive affect on students around the state. I believe at a time like this especially with the economy, and the things being taken away from students like instructional time and athletic fund cuts the students should have a say in what their education is going to be like. I strongly encourage the senators to change the Hawaii constitution to give BOE student member partial voting rights. Thank you for taking the time to go over and read my testimony. And once again I strongly encourage you to pass SB2350.

sakamoto2 - Erin

From: leilani lee [mexicolani@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2010 2:18 PM
To: Sen. Norman Sakamoto; Sen. Michelle Kidani; Sen. Suzanne Chun
Oakland; Sen. Brickwood Galuteria; Sen. Shan Tsutsui; Sen. Fred
Hemmings
Cc: Richard Lau
Subject: Support of SB2350,Voting Right for the Board of Education Member

February 8,2010

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto,Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Members of the Education and Housing Committe

From: Leilani Sanchez

Subject: Support of SB2350,Voting Right for the Board of Education Member

Aloha,

My name is Leilani Sanchez and I am currently a sophomore at Kalaheo High school. I strongly agree in SB 2350 and I would like to ask for your support. The Student Member directly represents the students,whom are directly affected by Board Polices. He/She is a direct link between the students and the state. In the last Kids Voting Survey 2008, 79% of the K-12 students who participated statewide voted in favor of the BOE student representative having voting rights.

For the last 20 years the Secondary Student Conference participants, which includes public, charter, and private school student representatives, voted to overwhelmingly your support a resolution giving the BOE. A majority of the adult BOE representatives support the student BOE representative having partial voting rights.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and i truly hope you will support Senate Bill 2350.

Evan Takemoto

Senate Education Committee
February 8th, 2010 @ 1:45pm

Hi my name is Evan Takemoto, a current senior at Aiea High School as well as the Student Association President. I am in full support for the Board of Education Student Member Voting Rights. As an individual representing over 15% of Hawaii public school students we need a voice, and a vote for the students, by the students. In addition, the Student Member has been proven to be a well qualified candidate, going through a procedure by the Hawaii State Student Council as well as being able to achieve high rigorous standards. As a high school student graduating, please let the rest of Hawaii Public Students have a say in their education. Thank you!

LATE TESTIMONY

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Education and Housing Committee

From: Emily Theoret

Date: Sunday, February 07, 2010

Subject: Support of SB 2350

Aloha, my name is Emily Theoret, and I am currently a sophomore at Kalaheo High School, here on Oahu. I strongly support SB 2350, and I would like to ask for your support. As it stands, the student member takes part in all activities and assumes all responsibilities as all other members, except the right to vote. The BOE's student member represents over 180,000 of Hawaii's students in over 250 public schools. The students are the most affected by the BOE's decisions and should have a voice in those decisions and the only way they can do that is through the vote of the BOE student member.

Voting rights on the State Board of Education's are not unheard of, and states like California, Vermont, Maryland and the District of Columbia all granted full or partial voting rights to their student member. Hawaii has always been at the forefront in supporting student activities. For the last 20 years the Secondary Student Conference participants voted overwhelmingly to support a resolution giving the BOE student member voting rights on the Board of Education.

A self-representation is a democratic ideal- a government for of, and by the people, which in this case are the students. Hawaii public school students represent 15% of the state's population yet have no vote. Please help reach this democratic ideal by supporting SB2350. Allowing the student member on the BOE to vote will increase and improve student participation in education and government.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I truly hope that you will support Senate Bill 2350.

February 6, 2010

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Members of the Education and Housing Committee

From: Vallie Rodriquez

Subject: Support of Senate Bill 2350, Student Member Voting Rights

Aloha! My name is Vallie Rodriquez, and I am currently a junior at Kalaheo High School on Oahu. I strongly believe in SB 2350, and I would like to ask for your support. The Student Board Member is the direct link between the students and the state and he/she is the person who represents the students, whom are the ones who are directly affected by Board policies, so he/she should be able to vote.

We supposedly believe in keeping decision-making closest to those whom are most directly affected by those decisions, so don't the students deserve a voice in their own education and welfare? The Student Board Member is the only member who is in the schools everyday and understands the implications of the Board policies on individual students. Since the student member works with the Hawaii State Student Council to gain greater insight into issues he/she has the knowledge and is capable of making the right decision for us, the students.

Full or partial voting rights for the student member have been granted to student members in California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Tennessee, and Vermont, so it isn't unheard of. If a majority of the adult BOE representatives support the student BOE representative having partial voting rights, then why not give the student member the right to have a say and let him/her vote. Giving the student member a true say by letting him/her vote will most likely improve student participation because the students will feel that what they do will matter. I encourage you to change the Hawaii Constitution to allow for partial voting rights for the BOE student member.

Mahalo for your time and I hope you consider my testimony in support of Senate Bill 2350.