

SB2571

SD1

Date of Hearing: Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Committee: Senate Committee on Judiciary and
Government Operations

Written Comments

Agency: Garrett Toguchi, Chairperson, Board of Education

Title of Bill: S.B. No. 2571, S.D. 1, Relating to the Board of Education

Purpose of Bill: Implements, upon ratification, the constitutional amendment that allows the governor to appoint the members of the Board of Education, with the advice and consent of the Senate, from candidates from pools of qualified candidates presented to the Governor by the Board of Education Candidate Nomination Commission.

Board's Position: Chairperson Taniguchi, Vice Chairperson Takamine, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations, thank you for the opportunity to comment on S.B. No. 2571, S.D. 1.

The Board of Education (Board) opposes S.B. No. 2570, S.D. 1, which is enabling legislation that allows the Governor to appoint the members of the Board, with the advice and consent of the Senate, from pools of qualified candidates presented to the Governor by the Board of Education Candidate Nomination Commission.

Under this bill, Hawaii's elected Board of Education, *determined by the voters* of our State, would be replaced with an appointed board,

determined by the Governor.

A Governor-appointed board would centralize educational decision-making too largely in the Executive Branch. Under S.B. No. 2571, S.D. 1, educational decision-making would be weighted heavily under the Governor, with Board members falling under the Governor's direction and appointment. Under such a governance structure, a Board member would have but one constituent: the Governor who appoints the Board member to office.

An appointed board would be partisan in nature, subject to the political affiliation of the governor at that particular time. An appointed board would also be beholden to the governor, the appointing authority, with the governor having varying degrees of influence over his or her appointed members in driving educational decisions and policy. An appointed board is inclined to be in lock-step with the governor. For example, an appointed board under Governor Lingle would likely have furloughed teachers and other employees 36 days each year under the Governor's initial proposal.

Unlike an appointed board, elected Board of Education members are nominated in a *nonpartisan* primary election and are elected in

a *nonpartisan* general election. A nonpartisan elected board assures independence in appointing a superintendent, without the trappings of political party affiliation.

An elected board is representative of a diverse cross section of viewpoints and individuals who are reflective of our communities. An elected board offers varying viewpoints that are discussed and hashed out publicly to form a Board position on policy and other educational matters. The great thing about an elected board is that anyone who meets the residency and candidacy requirements, is a registered voter, and does not hold any other public state or county government office, can run for a seat on the state Board of Education. Former legislators, school administrators, teachers, a police chief, attorneys, social workers, a military officer, business executives, and others from diverse and varied professional backgrounds and experiences have all served or serve on our elected board.

The Board of Education Candidate Nomination Commission established under S.B. No. 2571, H.D. 1 is an attempt to broaden the one-person/one-governor appointment process for selecting individuals to serve on the Board of Education. Similar to the

University of Hawaii Board of Regents Candidate Advisory Council established in law, the creation of the Board of Education Candidate Nomination Commission reflects recognition by the Legislature and the public's desire of the need to minimize sole control and sole decision-making by one person, i.e., the governor, over the appointment of individuals to serve on our public institutions. The establishment of these nonpartisan citizen advisory groups is an acknowledgement of the heed necessary and political nature of entrusting the governor, a sole individual, to appointment individuals to serve on our K-12 *and* higher education institutions. Direct citizen control through an *elected* board, not an *appointed* Board of Education, is the best way to ensure fairness, independence, and public participation and involvement in education.

Direct citizen control over education is essential to ensure that all members of our community have a say, a voice, and a vote as to who represents them on their state education board. Under an elected governance structure, voters assert their right to determine who serves them in office and have the ability to elect individuals out of office.

Changing the Board of Education from an elected board to an appointed board is no panacea for the challenges facing education in our State. There is no evidence that a shift to an appointed board will be more effective, or accountable, or improve student achievement. In fact, while the federal Race to the Top Fund grant advances educational reform in four specific areas: (1) adopting standards and assessments for student success; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success; (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals; and (4) turning around our lowest-achieving schools, the grant competition does not suggest an appointed board governance structure.

Educational improvements are a continuous process that occurs over time. Educational improvements occur when our educational system, schools, and classrooms are supported with adequate resources, a strong curricula, effective teachers, and other direct learning supports and resources to help children learn. These supports will have the strongest and most direct impact on student learning and achievement.

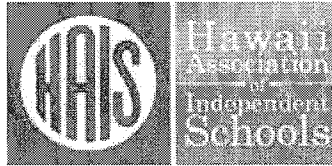
Education should be supported by all decision-makers and

important stakeholders involved in education: the Board, the Superintendent, the Governor, the Legislature, and the community. Responsibility and accountability must be shared by all involved.

Lastly, state boards have always been regarded as critical to insuring education as a state function, with the responsibilities of state boards reflecting two deeply-held educational values: the lay governance of education and the separation of educational policymaking from partisan politics.

We ask you to entrust the public with the power to vote for their Board of Education members, as they do for their governor and legislators. Education is everyone's business, not just a few.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



Tuesday, February 23, 2010
10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 016

TESTIMONY TO
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

RE: SB 2571, SD1 – Relating to the Board of Education

Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Takamine, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Witt and I am executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 99 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 33,000 students statewide.

The Association is in **strong support of Senate Bill 2571 SD1**, which establishes the board of education candidate nomination commission to nominate candidates for the board of education to be appointed by the governor.

HAIS is encouraged by this proposal by which the members of the Board of Education would be appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, from pools of qualified candidates presented to the governor by the board of education candidate nomination commission, as provided by law.

HAIS believes that discussion of the merits of this measure is urgently needed during the 2010 Legislative Session, and further believes that this measure may be aptly designed, in general, to increase accountability concerning public education in Hawaii.

We believe this measure will also encourage the Board of Education to restructure and decentralize public education for the purposes of increasing student achievement and protecting student rights. This provides added incentive for our association to support ongoing discussion of this measure in the weeks ahead.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure. As this measure moves forward for continuing discussion we pledge our involvement in the discussion of the merits of this idea, along with a full examination of the details that may be needed to support implementation should the measure be placed before the voters next November.



Kanu o ka 'Aina Learning 'Ohana

Grows womb-to-tomb models of education that advance Hawaiian culture for a sustainable Hawai'i

President
Kū Kahakalau Ph.D.

FEBRUARY 19, 2010

Vice President
Darryl Wise

TESTIMONY OF: Taffi Wise, Executive Director

Treasurer
Nancy Levenson

REGARDING THE FOLLOWING MEASURE: SB2571, S.D. 1

Trustee
Guy Kaulukukui Ph.D.

BEFORE THE: COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS

DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2010 TIME: 10:00AM

LOCATION: Conference Room 016
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Takamine, and members of the committee:

My name is Taffi Wise and I am the executive director of the Kanu o ka `Aina Learning `Ohana (KALO), which supports thousands of lifelong learners from multiple communities.

KALO is in **support of Senate Bill 2571, S.D.1** which proposes amendments to the selection process of the Hawaii Board of Education from an elected board to an appointed board.

KALO is encouraged by this proposal and would like to humbly request that additional seats be added to the nominating commission that is proposed; bringing the total to eleven seats to allow for representation from the following educational constituencies:

University of Hawaii
Hawaii Association of Independent Schools
Na Lei Na`auao- Native Hawaiian Charter School Alliance
Hawaii Charter School Network

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this measure, respectfully submitted.

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Honoring The Past...Addressing The Present...Serving The
Future



Monday, February 23, 2010
10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 016

TESTIMONY TO
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

RE: SB 2571 – Relating to the Board of Education

Dear Chair Taniguchi, Vice-Chair Takamine and Members of the Committee:

My name is Randy Baldemor and I write on behalf of Hawai'i's Children First. Hawai'i's Children First is an organization comprised of concerned citizens who support a number of education reforms, including an appointed board of education.

We are strongly supportive of the intent of SB 2571. In view of the current state of our education system and widespread public dissatisfaction, we believe the time is ripe for letting the community decide on how Board of Education members should be selected.

We believe that any discussion about the governance structure of our public education system should begin with a simple question:

Is Hawai'i's public education system serving our children and our community effectively?

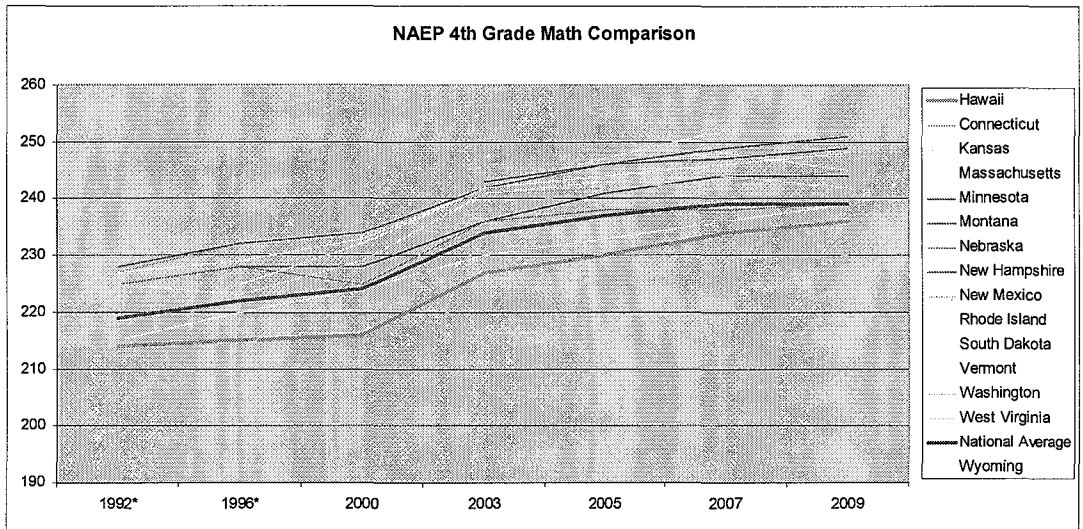
While there are many examples of excellent principals, teachers and students, there is one inescapable conclusion – the system as a whole is letting our children and the community down. Consider the following statistics:

- 74% of our 4th graders and 80% of our 8th graders were below proficient in reading;
- 64% of our 4th graders and 75% of our 8th graders were below proficient in mathematics.

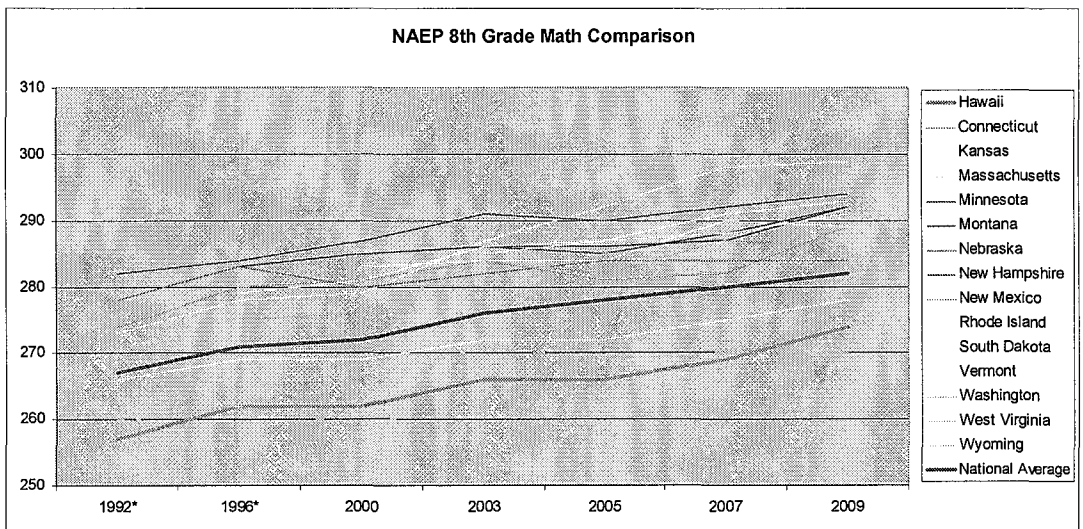
58% of our schools in 2008 did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress.

If we consider National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores and compare Hawai'i to the U.S. average and "comparable" states (as defined by the Legislature, DOE and Hawai'i Education Policy Center in 2007), we are well behind in achievement:

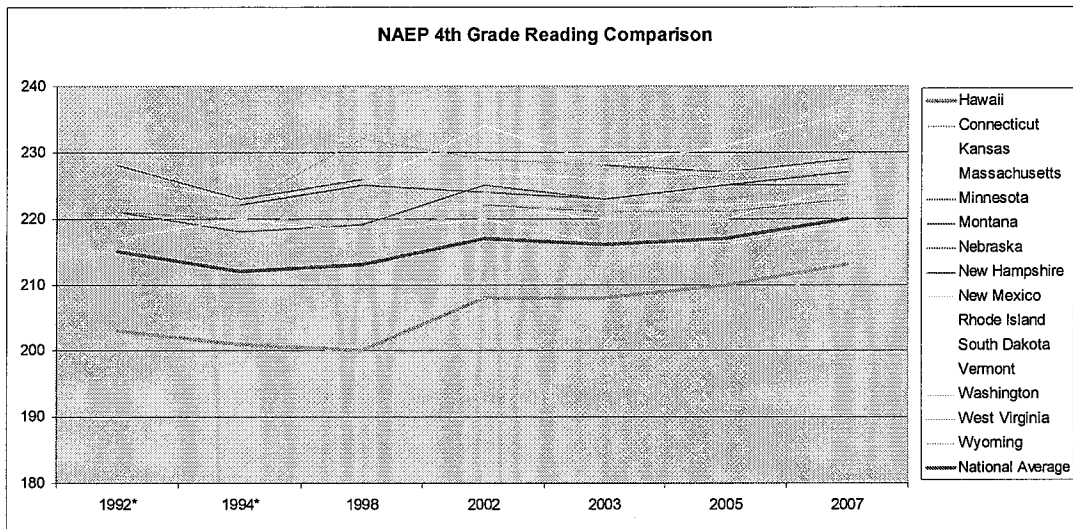
2009 – 4th Grade Math Ranking = 38th



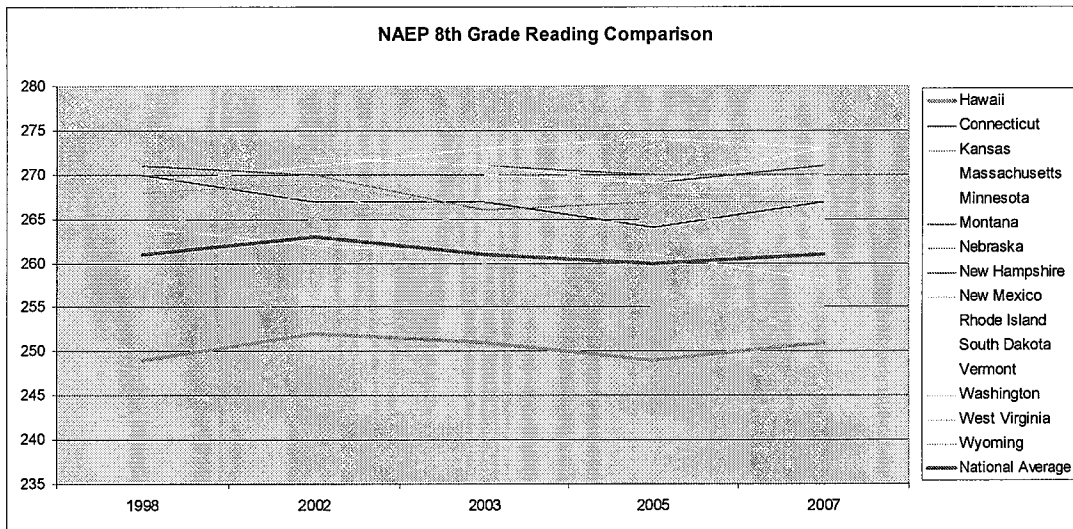
2009 – 8th Grade Math Ranking = 43rd



2007 – 4th Grade Reading Ranking = 44th



2007 – 8th Grade Reading Ranking = 47th



According to the U.S. Census Bureau, we rank 13th in the United States in terms of public education spending. We spend somewhere in the range of 40% to 50% or more of our general excise tax revenue on public education. Despite funding levels that appear to be very competitive with other states, we have one of the lowest amounts of instructional time in the year, made even worse by the school furloughs.

Who is responsible for the troubled state of our public education system?

There are certainly many factors that influence student achievement, especially the quality of instruction in the classroom. But, when the education system seems to be underperforming on a statewide level over a prolonged period of time, we must look to leadership and governance.

Under our state constitution, the Board of Education has the responsibility to formulate statewide education policy. For approximately 45 years, our Board of Education has been elected and, during that period, spanning many terms of elected board members, the performance of our education system has been unsatisfactory. The problem is systemic and the method of selecting Board of Education candidates is a significant part of the problem.

How do we improve the system?

Since the 45 year “experiment” of an elected board has not led to satisfactory results, the time is appropriate to give strong consideration to a system that appoints the Board of Education. An appointed board is the most reasonable approach. An appointed board has the following benefits:

- Greater accountability – the governor becomes accountable for the state of public schools;
- Better screening of candidates – a process that helps to ensure the selection of the most highly qualified individuals, such as individuals exhibiting good judgment and expertise in education policy, school leadership, teaching and other relevant subject areas, such as business;
- A more cohesive Board of Education that is less subject to electoral politics; and
- Improved structural alignment that is conducive to reform.

Most state boards (35) are appointed. Based on our analysis of the governance structures of other states and NAEP scores, eight of the top ten state boards in terms of NAEP achievement are appointed. There is only 1 state in the top ten with an elected state board. At the bottom of the rankings, forty percent of states in the bottom ten have elected boards, while only twenty percent have appointed boards. There are only five states with a mixed board or no board at all.

While we recognize Hawai‘i is unique and many factors have an influence upon student achievement, the adoption of an appointed Board of Education is an important step toward an improved education system. An appointed board will promote more thorough consideration of board candidates, greater accountability and stronger policy. We expect, in turn, this will help make a positive impact throughout the education system and, particularly, in the classroom.

Thus, we strongly urge the Committee to pass SB 2571 to restore accountability and efficiency in public education and to support a more prosperous education system that places Hawai'i's children first.



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

10:00 a.m.

Conference Room 016

RE: Relating to Education - Senate Bill 2571 SD1

Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Takamine and Members of the Committee:

My name is Gary Kai and I am the Executive Director of the Hawaii Business Roundtable. The Hawaii Business Roundtable fully supports SB 2571 SD1 that proposes amendments to the Hawaii Constitution relating to the Board of Education. The Hawaii Business Roundtable supports the requirement that the Board of Education members to be nominated and, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appointed by the Governor from pools of qualified candidates presented to the Governor.

The members of the Hawaii Business Roundtable represent companies in Hawaii that collectively employ over 70,000 people in Hawaii. These employees and their families and all of Hawaii, deserve a high quality Public Education System.

We believe that the current governance structure is ambiguous and has led to mixed priorities, conflicted leadership and a lack of accountability. Hawaii has had an elected board of education for 45 years that has contributed to the current status. What is truly needed is clear accountability and vision. The ultimate responsibility for the quality of our Public Education System should be that of the highest ranking position in our State Government, the Governor, giving education the top priority it deserves. A professional appointed Board will help to achieve that goal.

While there are many issues to be resolved as we move forward, we believe that this change is a step in the right direction. Our members are prepared to be a part of, and support a team to create a new vision for Public Education in Hawaii.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify and we look forward to joining your efforts to improve Public Education in Hawaii.

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TESTIMONY

Re: SB2571

Establishes the board of education candidate nomination commission to nominate candidates for the board of education to be appointed by the governor. Allows the board of education student member certain voting privileges upon ratification of an appropriate constitutional amendment. (SD1)

Aloha Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations Chair Tanaguchi, vice chair Takamine, and members:

Aloha Senate Committee on Education & Housing Chair Sakamoto, & members:

I strongly oppose SB 2571 as written, as it will limit Hawaii citizens' democratic rights to vote for local BOE members to represent their education district. As written, SB 2571 will destroy democratic process for public education & also politicize education policies. A governor with a strong political agenda could unduly influence BOE, eliminating public input into policy. This is a very dangerous situation, as political agendas such as teaching abstinence only, teaching creationism and banning books could more easily be accomplished. Maybe this seems o.k. if your political party is in power, but just think what could happen if the power flips.

SB 2571 & bills similar to it are knee-jerk reactions to the dire furlough day policy. I am a dedicated Hawaii public school teacher at Kealahou Intermediate. I am just as frustrated by furlough days as all people who truly care about the education of Hawaii's children. I worry about days of missed school. I use unpaid furlough days to plan curriculum & often spend time w/ students after 3pm on science fair & robotics projects. We did not get to this furlough situation via BOE, DOE alone. Teachers, BOE, DOE & HSTA were pushed by Gov. Lingle to follow the lead of other states to furlough rather than mass layoff state workers. We were given no choice. The furlough policy was poorly thought out by the Governor's office, & now as we try to add back days, the true costs of opening schools safely for kids have surfaced. The problem lies really with a view that public education for kids was not truly a priority, & DOE deserved the same across the board cuts as every other state agency. Valuing our children's education was not a priority in this process, spearheaded by Gov. Lingle. However just because the Governor's leadership was poor on the furlough & DOE budget crisis issue does not mean that we should suspend the democratic rights of Hawaii citizens to elect our BOE representation. Please remember that the Patriot Act, was also a knee jerk reaction which has seriously compromised our constitutional rights.

How can we be assured as citizens that nominees to the BOE by the Senate & governor are democratically chosen without political influence?

If you can explain in detail how the Senate or Governor's nomination process would work to ensure that school districts and children get fair and uncompromised representation, then I may be able to consider support. However these bills as written lack details of the nomination process, and are not well thought out—just like the furlough plan. Therefore, I cannot support SB 2571 & similar bills that take away Hawaii citizens' rights to democratic process at the BOE.

Sincerely,

**Lisa Diaz
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