

TESTIMONY
SB 2903

Testimony in Support of SB2903

Ms. Brandi Kaiolohia Masaoka, President, Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u Iki Local School Board

Aloha e nā Lunaho'omalu o nā Kōmike Ho'ona'auao o ka 'Aha'ōlelo. Ke hō'ike nei au ma kēia i ka'u kāko'o I ka pila SB2903.

My name is Kaiolohia Masaoka. I am the president of the charter school board that runs the K-8 program at Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u laboratory school of the UH-Hilo Hawaiian language college. Our charter uses the same facilities as, and is totally integrated with, a 9-12 high school program that falls under Hilo High School, and also a Pūnana Leo preschool. We see ourselves as one school – Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u.

The faculty, staff and families at our charter have benefited greatly from being a laboratory school of Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani College. Most of our teachers were trained there and we work well with the College.

This past year, our charter school was one of only 8 schools out of 55 on Hawai'i Island that passed state NCLB testing at its topmost rating, i.e., "Met Adequate Yearly Progress – In Good Standing, Unconditional." At the high school continuation level we have consistently had 100% graduation and 80% college attendance. We are also meeting our goal of revitalizing the Hawaiian language. Our strength in Hawaiian has allowed us to work with the College to develop an elementary Japanese language program as well.

I, along with my fellow Local School Board members of Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u Iki, are in full support of this bill. SB2903 will allow us to further improve our efforts. Please continue to support this bill.

Mahalo i ko 'oukou kāko'o 'ana mai.

Sincerely,



Brandi Kaiolohia Masaoka

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Kaleihōkū Kala'i, Department Chairperson,

Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u

Aloha e nā Kenekoa hanohano o ka 'Aha'ōlelo o Hawai'i nei. My name is Kaleihōkū Kala'i. I am one of the five high school teachers assigned to the DOE under Hilo High School whose full time work takes place at the Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u (Nāwahī) laboratory school site located in Kea'au, Puna. I am the Department Chairperson for the Nāwahī faculty and serve as the head representative at all Hilo High School administrative meetings. I urge passage of SB2903.

Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u was initiated as a special program within Hilo High in the 1990s with support of the Hawaiian program at UH-Hilo along with OHA and the 'Aha Pūnana Leo. When the UH-Hilo Hawaiian program became the Hawaiian language college we were designated its laboratory school and thus have a special status within Hilo High. A charter school was subsequently added at our site to serve elementary students. Having both a charter model and a standard public school model allows the laboratory school to work on best practices for both Hawaiian language schools using either the charter school or standard school administrative model.

This past year has been a challenging one where Nāwahī, like all government schools, has had to deal with severe budget reductions and furloughs. Nāwahī's charter school was able to prioritize funds to assure students were served, but those of us administered under Hilo High had to take furloughs. This hurt the school as a whole since we closely coordinate programming from preschool through high school and into college -- a P-20 model. Perhaps if this bill had been passed earlier, the College might have been able to work with us to avoid furloughs at the high school level.

Nāwahī has greatly benefited from its relationship with the College and this bill will move us further in our effort to return Hawai'i to the international educational leadership it had in the 1800s. We are already making some progress in this area.

Students at Nāwahī school overall come from approximately 70% free and reduced lunch backgrounds, yet our students have done much better on average than their peers taught through English. Our high school graduation rate has been 100% per year since our first class in 1999

and we usually have an 80% college attendance rate. Former Nāwahī students have graduated from Stanford, Loyola Marymount, and other prestigious universities. One is a doctoral candidate at Oxford. Our students have tended to win academic accolades under Hilo High greater than their percentage of the overall enrollment of Hilo High. SB2903 will help us continue to make progress and then extend what we have learned to other sites.

Mahalo nui loa i ka ho'olohe 'ana mai i kēia 'ōlelo hō'ike kāko'o a'u.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaleihökū Kala'i". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name being the most prominent.

Kaleihökū Kala'i



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs
Committee on Higher Education
Committee on Education and Housing
February 5, 2010 at 1:15 p.m.

by
Dr. Kalena Silva
Director, Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani
College of Hawaiian Language, UH Hilo

SB 2903 RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE COLLEGE

Aloha, Members of the Senate Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs, Higher Education, and Education and Housing Committees. I am Dr. Kalena Silva, the Director of Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. I urge passage of SB 2903.

I wish to express appreciation to this body, including the sponsors of SB 2903, for years of support in developing education through the Hawaiian language. Hawai'i is now the national leader in education through a Native American language. Not only are we known for reviving an endangered language, but for increased academic achievement among students in Hawaiian immersion schools.

The state's Hawaiian language college was established through legislative mandate in 1997 to allow for a P-20 system of education through Hawaiian. We offer programs through to the Ph.D. while serving as a unique resource for the development and support of P-12 education through Hawaiian.

Among the mandates from the 1997 legislature when it created our College was for us to develop a laboratory school program at Nāwahīkalanī'ōpu'u School, a site which was created through a partnership between the State DOE, the non-profit 'Aha Pūnana Leo, and Office of Hawaiian Affairs. We have done so, and now have a full P-20 education system in Hawaiian, based around that site. Nāwahī includes both a K-8 charter component and a 9-12 off-site standard public high school component. Three other charter schools have joined our laboratory school program along with the statewide Pūnana Leo preschool system that lies at the base of the Hawaiian immersion schools.

SB 2903 represents a step toward developing administrative practices that will further strengthen Hawaiian medium education. We seek to pilot the use of Hawaiian in administrative communication, modification of administrative services to meet unique Hawaiian medium education in-service needs, and other modifications of standard English medium education practice as appropriate to the unique needs of education within the context of revitalizing an endangered indigenous language.

Mahalo iā 'oukou no kā 'oukou kāko'o i ka 'ōlelo Hawai'i.

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