



February 12, 2009

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

**Hearing:**

2:30 P.M. Friday, February 13, 2009  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 225

**RE: SB802—Relating to Schools**

**Testimony in Strong Support**

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee on Education and Housing. My name is George Massengale and I am the Director of Government Relations with American Cancer Society Hawaii Pacific Inc. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in very strong support of SB802 which would require the DOE to provide a shaded play area or areas in all elementary schools, and implement an ongoing program to upgrade existing elementary schools with shaded areas.

The American Cancer Society Hawaii Pacific Inc., was founded in 1948, and is a community-based, voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service. This mission includes advocating for measures to protect people from environmental causes of cancer.

I would like to begin by providing the committee with a few skin cancer facts. There is new strong evidence suggesting that overall sun exposure in childhood, not just burns, is a major factor in who later develops deadly skin cancer. Skin cancer is also on the rise and is developing in younger people. The good thing is that many cases of skin cancer are preventable. We would point out that:

- **More than one million cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed this year.**  
The American Cancer Society estimates that 1.5 million cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed this year.
- **Skin cancer accounts for more than 50% of all cancers combined.**  
Skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed type of cancer among men and women.
- **More than 90% of skin cancer is caused by sun exposure.**  
The UV rays of the sun are responsible for non-melanoma skin cancers. Unprotected exposure to these rays can be from being outdoors, tanning booths, and even through your car or home windows.
- **Each hour, 1 person dies from skin cancer.**  
About 2,800 people will die of non-melanoma skin cancer and about 8,000 will die of melanoma in the U.S. this year. The sad thing is that many of these deaths could have been prevented by simply protecting ones self from the sun.

We are a state that truly enjoys out-of-door activities. Unfortunately we eventually pay the price. **Now for the bad news, melanoma has been the fastest-growing type of cancer among Hawaii residents since 1975.** The Society fully supports the provisions of SB802 of providing shaded play areas on our elementary school grounds. This is a very good step in ensuring that our Keiki will never have to undergo skin cancer treatments for either “basal cell carcinoma” or “deadly melanoma.”

Mahalo for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure. If there is any additional information that you may require please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Massengale", written in a cursive style.

George Massengale, JD  
Director of Government Relations