

HB 159

HD 1,SD1



Hawaii Charter Schools Network

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Testimony
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
March 30, 2011
Room 211
9:30A

Position: Opposition to HB159 HD1 SD1

Aloha Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Charter School Network (HCSN) is testifying in opposition to section 4 of HB159 HD1 SD1. The direction of this bill substantially changed from being a needs-based facilities funding formula bill to a bill that increases the charter schools general fund allocation withholding from up to 2% to up to 5% for operating expenses of the CSAO/CSRP. While we agree in principle that the CSAO and CSRP require support to perform essential tasks, we disagree with HB159's intention and direction to using student dollars to do so. We respectfully point out that charters strive to address students' needs through local decision making, and were intended to do so free from top-down governmental structures.

The member schools of HCSN have already begun to collaborate on legislative matters, including reporting and compliance, for next session via a meeting held on March 19, 2011 in Kona. Representatives from fourteen schools, CSAO, Kamehameha Schools, Na Lei Na`auao and HCSN attended, while subsequently Ho`okako`o and the remainder schools have committed to the process. Also, the two task forces proposed in SB1174 allows for the schools and support organizations to collaborate across the system with CSRP, appointed Board of Education, legislative and executive branches, and the HIDEOE.

While it is clear that the proposed language in Section 4 intends to help overcome perceived obstacles to accountability and transparency, HCSN offers assurances that these obstacles can be addressed in a collaborative and thoughtful process without increasing size and scope of government offices.

Additionally, while the process is underway to select a new Executive Director for the Charter School Administrative Office, Section 4 of HB159 comes at a time when the CSAO is in reboot, without the ability to reformat nor follow through with a vision, mission or set priorities. The potential of doubling the operating expenses of the CSAO in such absence is discomfoting to schools that stand to see a certain decrease in funding with no assurance that these dollars will ultimately serve students better.

The HCSN respectfully requests that Section 4 of HB159 HD1 SD1 be removed. We assure this esteemed committee that the charter schools are committed to collaborating with all involved to create processes and policies that strengthen charter schools in service of Hawai'i's keiki.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curtis Muraoka". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Curtis Muraoka, Vice-President



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hearing Date: Wednesday, March 30, 2011
9:30 A.M. – Conference Room 211

Kalei Kailihiwa
Director, Ho‘olako Like
Kamehameha Schools

Good afternoon Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. My name is Kalei Kailihiwa Director of Ho‘olako Like of Kamehameha Schools. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on **HB 159 HD1 SD1** which raises the percentage of the annual charter school fund allocation that the Charter School Administrative Office may withhold for operational expenses from two percent to five percent, provided that the Charter School Administrative Office reports annually to the legislature on the use of these funds and clarifies the duties and responsibilities of the Charter School Review Panel and local school boards.

While Kamehameha Schools supports the concept of providing additional resources to the CSAO, CSRP as well as Hawaii’s 31 public charter schools and their students, we are concerned that the measure as currently configured would too greatly expand the administrative overhead from instruction moneys. We would respectfully propose that instead a broader conversation – perhaps as a part of a governance task force – be convened to outline the conditions under which it would be appropriate for the implementation of the proposed increase from two percent to five percent that the Charter School Administrative Office may withhold for its operational expenses. We believe and support providing additional resources, but are concerned about the possible effects that this increase in the amount withheld would ultimately have on the charter schools and their students. For these reasons, we ask that you please amend the measure accordingly.

Kamehameha Schools supports promoting the achievement and success of Hawaii public school students and, as such, has been a collaborator with the Hawaii public charter schools. As part of our Education Strategic plan, KS hopes to significantly impact more Hawaiian children ages 0-8 and grades 4-16+, and their families/ caregivers over the next five years, in collaboration with others whenever possible.

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Currently, Kamehameha Schools works with 13 nonprofit tax-exempt organizations, including `Aha Punana Leo, OHA, KALO and Ho`okako`o Corporation, to assist a total of 14 start-up and 3 conversion charters with special projects, professional development, and technical assistance.

Kamehameha Schools believes that these efforts provide more positive educational choices and ultimately enhances academic achievement and greater school engagement for Hawaiian students. Through these collaborations, Kamehameha Schools currently assists more than 3,600 students in eleven communities on 4 major islands, within the public education system.

In summary, supporting and replicating the successful strategies found in Hawaiian-focused charter schools is a good way to invest in education that has potential benefits for the entire public school system.