

HB688

HD2



**STATE OF HAWAII
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

P. O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Senate Comm. on Education
Hearing: Mon., Mar. 18, 2011
1:45 p.m., Conf. Room 225

Testimony in STONG SUPPORT of HB688 hd2 with ESSENTIAL AMENDMENTS
Relating to Education: SAFE SCHOOLS ACT

Chair Tokuda, Vice-Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee on Education:

Thank you for allowing me to testify in my capacity as a member of the Hawaii State Board of Education (BOE); I testify in strong support of HB688 hd2, the Safe Schools Act, with essential amendments.

At our March 3, 2011, General Business Meeting, the BOE voted to support HB688 hd1. That same evening, the House Finance Committee passed a gutted version of the Safe Schools Act. I urge this Committee to **restore HB688 to its hd1 version**, including all seven of the missing sections.

The vision statement approved by the BOE for Hawaii Public Schools states in relevant part that “[a]ll schools . . . are safe, nurturing learning communities[.]” One of the goals for Hawaii Public schools approved by the BOE states: “Goal 5 Provide safe and secure schools.” Implementing the hd1 version should not pose an additional cost to the DOE since it has a pre-existing responsibility to reach those same outcomes; furthermore, the DOE has stated that it is in the process of doing so.

Positive character development and anti-bullying intervention should be considered a standard part of instructional delivery and maintaining a safe learning environment. There are many free online resources for teachers, students and families that currently exist. The Department has an existing duty to ensure that students are not being hurt by other students. Like any other accountability measure, the Department should already be monitoring reports of bullying to identify negative trends and implement corrective action.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services’ website, Hawaii is one of only 5 states that does not have anti-bullying legislation. Let’s not be the last. For the reasons stated above, I urge this Committee to pass the Safe Schools Act, HB688 with amendments.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kim Coco Iwamoto, Esq., Oahu-at-Large Member

Date: 03/18/2011

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 0688,HD2(hscr879) Relating to Education

Purpose of Bill: Defines "bullying", "cyberbullying", and "harassment" in Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, relating to the public schools. Effective July 1, 2030. or groups of students from bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment.

Department's Position: The Department of Education supports HB 688, HD 2 (HSCR 879) as the proposed definitions for "bullying," "cyberbullying," and "harassment" are aligned with the definitions and provisions in Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 8, Chapter 19.

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education

March 18, 2011 at 1:45pm
Conference Room 225

Written Testimony
By
Christine K. Sorensen
Dean, College of Education
University of Hawaii at Mānoa

HB 688: RELATING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee:

As Dean of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s College of Education, I would recommend language now included in SB934 rather than the language in HB 688.

While cyberbullying is of great concern, and legislation should be enacted to combat this behavior, there are other bills which address the issues and definitions of cyberbullying with more comprehensive language than that in HB 688. In particular, SB 934 lays out a definition of bullying that is less ambiguous, while setting up a system through which schools will create complete cyberbullying prevention and reporting policies.

There are two passages in HB 688, under the definition of harassment, which are particularly vague: “Making a telephone call without the purpose of legitimate communication” and “Making repeated communications anonymously, at extremely inconvenient hours.” While the intent of the bill is clear, the language of the bill is not. There are a number of situations in which teens and children, and even adults, might call each other, repeatedly, for no particular reason. Similarly, what constitutes an “inconvenient hour” could include a gamut of times when the call is made at an appropriate yet inconvenient hour – such as dinner time. While the bill does specify that the calls must create “mental harm,” the nature of communication between teens and children is often emotional and dramatic. These very normal – albeit dramatic – communications are easily included as cyberbullying under the language of this bill.

While we should strive to protect our children and provide healthy learning environments, we must also allow them to be children, which may include pervasive, emotional, and repeated communication not intended to harm the parties involved. The intent of this bill is good; however, SB 934 provides better definitions and plans for battling cyberbullying.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

ALII PLACE
1060 RICHARDS STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-7400 • FAX: (808) 768-6552

KEITH M. KANESHIRO
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY



ARMINA A. CHING
FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

THE HONORABLE JILL N. TOKUDA, CHAIR
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Twenty-sixth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2011
State of Hawai`i

March 18, 2011

RE: H.B. 688, H.D. 2; RELATING EDUCATION.

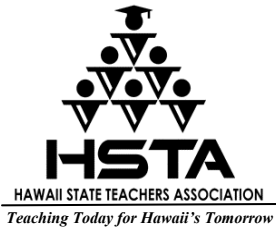
Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Senate Committee on Education, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, City and County of Honolulu submits the following testimony in support of H.B. 688, H.D. 2.

The purpose of this bill is to define "bullying", "cyberbullying", and "harassment" in Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, relating to the public schools.

It is a policy goal of our department to not only prosecute violent individuals who violate our criminal laws, but educate individuals on the wrongfulness of violence. We need to reach out to our children and teens early about the wrongfulness of bullying and cyberbullying, which causes physical and/or mental injury to others. By impacting our youth early, we may prevent perpetrators of bullying and cyberbullying from escalating to more violent acts in the future, or we may prevent other youth from ever starting such misconduct.

In a 2009 survey done by the Department of Education of 15,000 students or 11% of the public school students, 51% of the students continued to feel bullied and harassed and 63% agree that bullying and harassment are problems. It has been found that these behaviors have resulted in campus violence where students and teachers have been killed on campus. It has also been found that some of the shooters were victims of bullying and resorted to violence because the schools did not address the problems sooner.

For these reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney supports the passage of H.B. 688, H.D. 2, and we are willing to work with all stakeholders on this important issue. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



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Karolyn Mossman
Vice President

Joan Kamila Lewis
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Alvin Nagasako
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION

RE: HB 688, HD2 -- RELATING TO EDUCATION

March 18, 2011

WIL OKABE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association strongly supports HB 688, HD2, which would urge all Hawaii schools to implement standards of conduct to discourage intimidation and promote safe and peaceful schools to create an effective learning environment.

We believe every child should be able to come to school and not feel intimidated or bullied by others. HSTA and NEA believe, bullying robs students of their opportunity to learn and exacts scars that can last a lifetime. Its victims are more likely to fall behind, miss school, and eventually drop out. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that every child can attend a safe public school.

We believe students need a safe environment with a significant adult on campus when confronted with intimidation and bullying.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 702 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 531-2198 Fax: (808) 534-1199

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Alan Shinn, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Adolescent Services Program, Kaiser
Permanente Medical Care System

Aloha House

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii

Assistive Technology Resource Ctrs. of HI
Bay Clinic, Inc.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Honolulu

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

Blueprint for Change

Bobby Benson Center

Catholic Charities Hawaii

Central Oahu Youth Services Assn.

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

College Connections

Community Assistance Center

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Support Services of West Hawaii

Friends of the Missing Child Center of HI

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Behavioral Health

Hawaii Student Television

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition

Hina Mauka Teen Care

Hui Malama Learning Center

Kahi Mohala Behavioral Health

Kama'aina Kids, Inc.

KEY (Kualoa-Heeia Ecumenical Youth)
Project

Kids Behavioral Health

Kids Hurt Too

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kula No Na Poe Hawaii

Lanai Community Health Center

Life Foundation

Marimed Foundation

The Maui Farm, Inc.

Maui Youth and Family Services

Palama Settlement

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together (PACT)

Planned Parenthood of Hawaii

Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center
Kona Unit

REAL

Salvation Army Family Intervention Svcs.

Salvation Army Family Treatment Svcs.

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

The Children's Alliance of Hawaii

Waikiki Health Center

Women Helping Women

YouthVision

YWCA of Kauai

March 16, 2011

To: Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
And members of the Committee on Education

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 688 HD2RELATING TO BULLYING

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of more than 50 youth serving organizations, supports HB 688 HD2Relating to Bullying.

According to the Hawaii Youth Behavioral Risk Survey, Hawaii has a low rate of youth violence in almost every area except bullying. The number of youth who have stated that they were afraid to go to school or have missed school due to bullying is much higher than the national average. Bullying prevention and response was one of the top priorities among the 150 youth who participated in the 2010 Children and Youth Summit at Washington Place.

Students who are victims of bullying are not able to take full advantage of their educational opportunities. They are unable to concentrate on their studies, may choose truancy to avoid contact with bullies, and, in extreme cases, find the bullying so intolerable that they choose suicide as the only way to end it.

The Department of Education appears to have adequate rules and regulations that address bullying, but students report that these rules are not being adequately enforced to ensure safety and well-being. When bullying is reported to teachers and other school personnel, they are often told to resolve if among themselves. It is essential that Department of Education personnel provide a quick and appropriate response to bullying by enforcing the existing rules and providing prevention education on bullying and harassment.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark
Executive Director

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of HB688, the Safe Schools Act. I work for the Department of Health, but am testifying as a private citizen.

I am a member of DOE's Safe Schools Community Advisory Committee that worked for two years from 2005 – 2007 to develop the document *Recommendations for Addressing Harassment in Hawaii's Public Schools* that was presented to the BOE in 2007. I was appointed by the Director of Health to represent the Department of Health on this Committee.

In order to ensure that all Hawaii youth in our public schools have access to a safe and supportive environment, it is necessary to pass HB 688.

However, HB688 hd2 needs to be amended by restoring Section 3 back into the bill, as it was in HB688 hd1. It is essential that the Senate Education Committee re-insert Section 3 which is the substance of the Safe Schools Act.

The intent and language of the Safe Schools Act – as reflected in HB688 hd1 - reflects the BOE's policies and administrative rules and the DOE's current intentions. The definitions for bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment in this bill are almost identical to those found in Chapter 19. The recommendations of the DOE's Safe Schools Community Advisory Committee are reflected throughout the maintenance and enforcement section of the Safe Schools Act, but only if Section 3 is restored into the bill.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services' website. Hawaii is one of only 6 states that does not have anti-bullying legislation. According to the most recent U.S. CDC-funded survey, 51% of Hawaii's public high school students and 63% of middle school students "strongly agree or agree that harassment and bullying by other students is a problem at their school."

For the reasons stated above, I urge this Committee to pass the Safe Schools Act, HB688, with section 3 restored.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nancy Kern
Chair, Hawaii Safe Schools Coalition



46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Legislative Director

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 688, HOUSE DRAFT 2, RELATING TO BULLYING
AND CYBERBULLYING**

**Senate Committee on Education
Hon. Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Hon. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair**

**Friday, March 18, 2011, 1:45 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

Honorable Chair Tokuda and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing the Imua Alliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 60 local members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in opposition to HB 688, HD2, relating to bullying and cyberbullying, in its current form.

Recent research shows that over 50 percent of Hawaii teenagers report having been subjected to cyberbullying, either over the internet or through cellular devices. Luckily, Hawaii has yet to experience a high profile “bullicide”—suicide resulting from bullying—related to cyberbullying, like the heartbreaking passing of Missouri teen Megan Meier, in 2006, or Massachusetts high school student Phoebe Prince, in 2010, both of which resulted from prolonged harassment online. Hawaii has suffered its fair share of incidents, however, including the case of Damien Memorial School coach Doug Andrade, last October, whereby Andrade discovered that one of the school’s male cheerleaders was being bullied on Facebook, then used his daughter’s account to sling a string of verbal barbs at the alleged perpetrators of the harassment. Clearly, online content will continue to grow more sophisticated over the coming years, and something must be done to curtail the usurpation of online media for nefarious purposes before tragedy occurs.

Unfortunately, the enforcement provisions of HB 688, HD2 were deleted by the House Committee on Finance, owing to concerns that the cost of implementation would exacerbate the current fiscal crisis. Therefore, while the Imua Alliance supported the original draft of the Safe Schools Act, we cannot show the same level of enthusiasm for the amended version. Without stipulations mandating that a wide-ranging bullying and cyberbullying policy be carefully

monitored and enforced by the Department of Education, such a policy has no teeth, and, instead, is mere window dressing for a problem that deserves more serious action. Unless elements of an earlier draft of HB 688 are restored, a better vehicle for combating cyberbullying, at this point, would be SB 934, SD2, which passed the House Committee on Education, on Wednesday.

Already, teachers have engaged in training to combat the rise of cyberbullying. If a comprehensive policy, like the one envisioned by SB 934, SD2, is not put in place, it is only a matter of time before misfortune strikes. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in opposition to this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Legislative Director
IMUAlliance



Committee: Committee on Education
Hearing Date/Time: Friday, March 18, 2011, 1:45 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 225
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii Offering Comments to H.B. 688, HD2, Relating to Education

Dear Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committee on Education:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii (“ACLU of Hawaii”) offers comments to H.B. 688, HD2, Relating to Education.

The ACLU and the ACLU of Hawaii have a long history of vigorously promoting nondiscrimination and respect for the civil rights of children in public education. We are at the forefront of efforts, through both impact litigation and legislative and executive branch work, to ensure that students, in particular children of color, girls, children with disabilities, those with limited English proficiency, and LGBT youth, do not suffer from current discrimination or its legacy. We have consistently fought for an educational system that encourages every student to succeed in school. Moreover, the ACLU of Hawaii strongly supports the adoption comprehensive education policies and procedures designed to educate students and parents about the consequences of bullying and to eradicate discrimination. H.B. 688, HD2, as currently drafted, however, is not the proper vehicle to achieve these ends.

H.B. 688, HD2, in proposed H.R.S. § 302A-101, appears to apply to all communications whether or not the bullying, cyberbullying or harassment occurs inside or outside of school. Any effort to have schools police the speech of children outside of school is certain to run into legal challenges. Simply put, the Department of Education has no authority to regulate students’ speech outside of school and school-related functions. As the United States Supreme Court stated forty years ago, “School officials do not possess absolute authority over their students.”¹ The Court explained further:

Students in school as well as out of school are ‘persons’ under our Constitution. They are possessed of fundamental rights which the State must respect, just as they themselves must respect their obligations to the State. In our system, students may not be regarded as closed-circuit recipients of only that which the State

¹ *Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Cmty. Sch. Dist.*, 393 U.S. 503, 511 (1969).

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii
P.O. Box 3410
Honolulu, Hawaii'i 96801
T: 808.522-5900
F: 808.522-5909
E: office@acluhawaii.org
www.acluhawaii.org

Chair Tokuda and Members of the
Committee on Education
March 18, 2011
Page 2 of 2

chooses to communicate. They may not be confined to the expression of those sentiments that are officially approved.²

Legislators are understandably concerned about harassment and threats that occur outside of school. However, speech that is threatening or harassing is not protected under the First Amendment and is already prohibited under Hawaii law. If a student threatens someone outside of school, the student can be arrested and prosecuted (just as any other person could be arrested and prosecuted for threatening speech). The DOE has no authority to regulate out-of-school speech any further, because doing so would infringe on the First Amendment rights of students (as well as on the constitutional rights of the child's parents to raise her or his child free from government interference). Disciplining a child for out-of-school conduct is a task reserved for the child's parents or guardians (or law enforcement if appropriate). This authority should not – and constitutionally cannot – be delegated to the DOE.

The mission of the ACLU of Hawaii is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawaii fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawaii is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawaii has been serving Hawaii for over 40 years.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Laurie A. Temple
Staff Attorney
ACLU of Hawaii

² *Id.*

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 1:50 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: jadamesq@aol.com
Subject: Testimony for HB688 on 3/18/2011 1:45:00 PM
Attachments: SECTION 3 to be added back into HB688.docx

Testimony for EDU 3/18/2011 1:45:00 PM HB688

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Jo-Ann M. Adams
Organization: GLBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: jadamesq@aol.com
Submitted on: 3/17/2011

Comments:
Please amend the bill to reinstate Section 3 of HB688.

SECTION 3. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§302A- Bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment; departmental responsibilities. (a)
This section shall apply to conduct occurring on all public elementary and secondary school premises, at any school-sponsored functions or activities, and on school-sponsored transportation. This section also applies to electronic technology usage and electronic communications that occur on all public elementary and secondary school premises, at any school-sponsored functions or activities, on school-sponsored transportation, and on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists.

(b) The department shall maintain and monitor anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies that:

(1) Are applicable to grades kindergarten through twelve; and

(2) Contain definitions of bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment, as defined in section 302A-101.

(c) The department shall maintain and enforce appropriate procedures that incorporate:

(1) Effective publicizing of the policies established pursuant to subsection (b), including adding a statement of those policies to new employee training materials, student handbooks, and any other publication that sets forth comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools;

(2) Conducting annual training at the school level on how to promote peace and respect and how to intervene when students are engaged in bullying, cyberbullying, or harassing behavior;

(3) The investigation of violations of this section;

(4) Reporting and response mechanisms that address the failure of schools, complex areas, and administrators in implementing this section;

(5) Mechanisms for reporting incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment by complex areas and schools;

(6) Making available to the public statewide statistics concerning bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment, as defined in section 302A-101;

(7) The filing of complaints against complex areas and schools upon their failure to comply with and implement policies pursuant to this section;

(8) Establishing clear lines of accountability, including the designation of one person in the department as the primary contact regarding anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies, who shall receive copies of all formal and informal complaints, be responsible for assuring the

implementation of policies and procedures pursuant this section, and serve as the primary contact on the policies and procedures between the school district and the department;

(9) Requiring school employees and trained volunteers who witness incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, or harassment, or possess reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying, cyberbullying, or harassment, to promptly report those incidents or that information to the school principal, complex area superintendent, or superintendent;

(10) Prompt investigation of reports or complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, or harassment, and identification of either the principal or the principal's designee as the person responsible for the investigation;

(11) Delineation of the range of ways in which a school will respond once an incident of bullying, cyberbullying, or harassment is identified, including a range of potential age-appropriate education-focused consequences that correspond to the prohibited bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment acts;

(12) The provision of appropriate referrals or resources to student victims, perpetrators, and their respective families, if necessary;

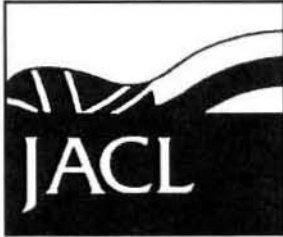
(13) Provisions that prohibit reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying, cyberbullying, or harassment and describe appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation;

(14) Provisions that allow for anonymous reporting while clarifying that no remedial action shall be undertaken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;

(15) The collection, reporting, and analyzing, at least on an annual basis, of data on incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment; and

(16) The establishment of a school community culture that integrates the aloha spirit, evidence-based anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies and procedures, and peace promoting elements into each school's curriculum, and creates and encourages an environment of safety and respect for all.

(d) The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 to carry out the purposes of this section."



JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

HONOLULU CHAPTER

P.O. BOX 1291, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96807

PHONE: 523-8464 EMAIL: honolulu@jacl.org

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Senate Committee on Education
Friday, March 18, 2011 at 1:45 p.m.
Hawai'i State Capitol – Room 225

Testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 688** with Amendment, Relating to Education

Dear Chair Tokuda, Vice-Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

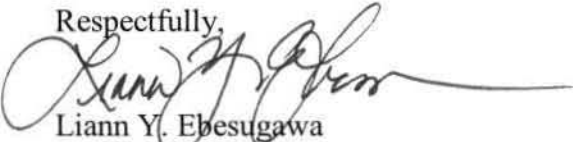
The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) Honolulu Chapter supports the passage of House Bill 688 with amendment, because it will encourage the Department of Education to maintain and enforce existing anti-bullying policies to protect all children and ensure their right to a safe education.

JACL is the nation's oldest and largest Asian Pacific American civil rights organization with over 20,000 members. Locally our organization has consistently supported efforts to provide equal rights to all citizens of this state.

We are in strong support of the intention of House Bill 688 but believe that its current form HD 2 does not truly fulfill this purpose of protecting students from bullying, cyberbullying and harassment. We encourage this committee to restore Section 3 from House Bill 688 HD 1 because these provisions provide the monitoring and enforcement policies related to bullying, cyberbullying and harassment.

By doing so, House Bill 688 ensures State statutes are aligned with the Department of Education's Policy #4211 (Anti-harassment, Anti-bullying and Anti-discrimination against student(s) by employees) and Hawaii Administrative Rule Chapter 8-19 (prohibiting student conduct including harassment, bullying and cyber-bullying). In addition, the measure will put the recommendations by the Safe Schools Community Advisory Council into statute. What this ultimately means for our students is that they will all be protected from bullying and cyber-bullying and be able to learn in safe environments.

We urge you to pass out the measure with the amendment. For your time and consideration, thank you.

Respectfully,

Liann Y. Ebesugawa
1st Vice President

Erin Conner

From: Marya Grambs [Marya@mentalhealth-hi.org]
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 5:09 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: Kim Coco Iwamoto; Kathleen Delahanty
Subject: HB688HD2, Hearing March 18, 1:45 pm

TO: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION: Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair, Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair, and members

FROM: Mental Health America of Hawai`i: Mary Pat Waterhouse, President, Board of Directors, and Marya Grambs, Executive Director

RE: The Safe Schools Act HB688 HD2; hearing on Friday March 18, 2011, 1:45

TESTIMONY:

We would like the Committee to consider AMENDING HB688 HD2 by restoring HB688 to its HD1 version, thereby including the missing sections. Without these sections, HB688 HD2 merely defines bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment. It does nothing to improve efforts to stop bullying. Hawai`i has the highest rate in the nation of girls who miss days of school because they are afraid, and a higher than average rate of boys. This is shameful. It is our obligation to make our schools safe for students.

These sections in HB688 HD1 require our school system to maintain and monitor anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies, and define what those policies must include, who they shall apply to, and what procedures shall be followed. Our students deserve nothing less. Please protect Hawai`i's students by restoring HB688 to its HD1 version.

With Aloha,

Marya Grambs, Executive Director
Mental Health America of Hawai`i
...Helping Hawai`i Live Life Well
1124 Fort Street Mall, Suite 205
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 808-521-1846
Fax: 808-533-6995
email: marya@mentalhealth-hi.org
website: www.mentalhealth-hi.org

Note: Please let me know by emailing me if it's not okay with you to be added to our email list to receive occasional emails from us (invitations to our mental health seminars and our May luncheon, job announcements, etc.).

EQUALITY HAWAII

March 17, 2011

Senate Committee on Education
Hearing: Friday, March 18, 2011
1:45 p.m., Conference Room 225

Testimony: In Support With Amendments of HB688 HD2
Relating to Education, Bullying & Cyberbullying

Aloha distinguished members of the Hawaii State Senate Committee on Education:

On behalf of Equality Hawaii, the state's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) advocacy organization we write in strong support of safe schools legislation as this is consistent with our mission.

We appreciate the intent of HB688 to define bullying and cyberbullying as well as the inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. All students deserve a school environment that is safe and conducive to learning. Sadly, all too often, students fall victim to harassment which sometimes leads to tragic consequences. Most recently, there has been much media publicity on LGBT youth suicide, a problem that is compounded by hostile school environments. Studies have shown for decades that LGBT youth are more likely to be bullied at school based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBT youth represent a disproportionate number of youth suicides.

When we were students in the 1970s and 1980s, anti-gay harassment was rampant and teachers/administrators did little to stop it. Times need to change. This bill is a very important step in addressing this very serious issue.

However, we strongly urge you to amend this bill and reinstate Section 3 of the HD1 version, which was the substance of the act.

We strongly urge you to support this bill with amendments.

Aloha,
Valerie Smith, Co-Chair
Alan R. Spector, Co-Chair
Josh Frost, Legislative Committee Chair
Donald L. Bentz, Treasurer



March 18, 2011

Senate Committee on Education

Chair, Sen. Jill Tokuda

Vice Chair, Sen. Michelle Kidani

Testimony in support of HB 688 Relating to Education (restored to HD1 version)

Pride At Work Hawai'i, as an affiliate of the Hawai'i State AFL-CIO which works to mobilize lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) workers and their supporters for full equality and to build mutual support between the labor movement and the LGBT community, strongly supports HB 688, particularly with language from HD1 restored. We believe that all students need to be able to learn and study without the threat of bullying or harassment, and that our public schools should protect and encourage diversity. As originally drafted, the bill would require the department of education to maintain, monitor, and enforce anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies and procedures to protect students.

Unfortunately, the HD2 version of the bill removed some of the most important language needed to fully protect students.

Importantly, the Act specifies that bullying includes conduct that is based on a number of categories, including gender identity or expression and sexual orientation. Studies have shown that LGB youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers, and LGBT youth reporting higher levels of at-school bullying and victimization report higher levels of substance use, suicidal thoughts, feelings and actions, as well as engaging in increased risky behaviors than their heterosexual peers and/or those who are not bullied because of their sexual orientation. Lower victimization rates and decreased suicidality among LGBTQ youth has been linked with anti-bullying policies, along with peer support groups, the availability of non-academic counseling, a student judicial court system, staff training on sexual harassment and peer-tutoring systems.

A 2009 survey of 7,261 middle and high school students found that at school nearly 9 out of 10 LGBT students experienced harassment at school in the past year and nearly two-thirds felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation. Nearly a third of LGBT students had skipped at least one day of school in the prior month because of safety concerns.

Families - including families of working people - are deeply affected by their children's experiences in school. When children face harassment or bullying, additional stress and anxiety are placed on parents, many of whom are already stressed by economic conditions. Schools are also workplaces for teachers, administrators, and service personnel. Allowing bullying and harassment - or not enforcing anti-bullying policies - creates a dangerous atmosphere for these workers, and it is time for the State to act and ensure that every effort is made to make sure it stops. Thank you for making the time to hear this important bill.

**PFLAG-OAHU (Parents, Families and Friends of
Lesbians, Gays, Transgendered, Bisexuals,
Transgendered & Questioning)**



92-954 Makakilo Dr. #71, Kapolei, HI 96707 (808) 672-6050
golojuhc@hawaii.rr.com www.pflagoahu.org

ATTN: Senate Education Committee

HEARING DATE: March 18, 2011
HEARING TIME: 1:45 p.m.
PLACE: House Conference Room 225

IN Strong Support of HB688 HD2 - RELATING TO Education w/Amendment

Dear Chairs and members of the Senate Education Committee:

PFLAG-Oahu strongly supports passage of HB688 to protect students and enforce anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies and procedures to protect students or groups of students from bullying, cyber bullying, and harassment. We respectfully request that you re-instate Section 3. PFLAG-Oahu has worked on social justice for students in Public Schools for the past 11 years. Without Section 3, HB688 is meaningless with no protection of the students and no enforcement of Chapter 19.

PFLAG-Oahu is the longest existing support organization that focuses on educating, advocating and supporting parents, families and friends of our GLBT and non-gay students for almost 16 years. We advocated for the passage of Chapter 19 - Non-Discrimination Policy for over two years. Chapter 19 was printed in 2002 and to this date has not been enforced.

PFLAG-Oahu has repeatedly written letters to DOE asking for implementation of Ch.19. Some of these letters are presented as part of this testimony. These letters do not reflect all the incidents that have come to our attention but are presented to reflect the variety and time line involved of our efforts to draw attention to the need for implementation of Chapter 19.

In addition, over the years PFLAG-Oahu has been called for assistance with problems in a variety of schools and the treatment by schools of our GLBT students. A Student threatened with physical harm by boys who want to show her how to be a female High School Student; transgender female student threatened by a Vice Principal who said he would take her bra off if her bra strap slipped again; transgender female student's hair pulled by school guard (no discipline was ever meted for the guard. One of our first families reported that their gay High School student was told to spend his time reading scriptures during lunch time after complaining of threats by other students.

"If more people believed in justice, equality would be reality." CMG

“If more people believed in justice, equality would be reality.” CMG

The following information is from the 2007 National School Climate Survey (New York, NY: GLSEN, 2008)

- 86.2% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, 44.1% reported being physically harassed, and 22.1% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation.
- More than half (60.8%) of students reported that they felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation, and more than a third (38.4%) felt unsafe because of their gender expression.
- 31.7% of LGBT students missed a class and 32.7% missed a day of school in the past month because of feeling unsafe, compared to only 5.5% and 4.5%, respectively, of a national sample of secondary school students.
- The reported grade point average of students who were more frequently harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender expression was almost half a grade lower than for students who were less often harassed (2.8 versus 2.4).

This data, the previous incidents and others have motivated us to continue to work for safe schools for all students. Please pass this bill with Section 3 because all students deserve a safe school environment. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Martinez Golojuch, MSW
President

TESTIFIER: Melanie Bailey

To: THE SENATE
THE TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2011

Attn: Committee on Education
Senator Tokuda, Chair
Senator Kidani, Vice Chair

Re: HB 688 RELATING TO EDUCATION (Safe Schools Act)
Hearing Date March 18, 2011 1:15pm

Testimony in Support

I am in **SUPPORT** of creating school's that are safe and positive learning environments, free from harassment. I speak to you as a parent and the Human Resource Manager of a restaurant who employe 300 employees, 200 of them in their teens and twenties.

As an employer we are required to provide a workplace that is free from harassment and are dependent on our public and private schools to lay the groundwork. By continually working on having a positive work environment we have found attendance has improved and productivity is enhanced. A safe school environment will produce the same results.

The Board of Education has put policies into place but recent surveys and events have shown that reporting, investigation, and intervention are not being followed through in a consistent manner. I believe the State has an obligation to provide safe schools for our children and that this legislation is taking a step in the right direction.

Thank you for your time.

Friday March 18, 2011, 1:45PM
Senate Committee on Education
State Capitol Room 225
415 South Beretania Street

RE: HB688, HD2

Position: Support

Aloha Chair Tokuda and other committee members,

My name is Alicia Towler, and I am a first year social work student at the University of Hawaii.

I would like to express my support for HB688, defining bullying and cyber-bullying in schools. The past year brought to light many stories of teens who committed suicide after being bullied at school and through technological means like Facebook and text messaging. To pretend that the schools' existing policies meant to deter bullying were effective would be misleading.

Schools need to take a more aggressive approach to preventing bullying and cyber-bullying, and the first step to doing that is to define the problem and require that action be taken when cases of bullying are reported. In too many of the reported cases of teen suicides, the teens reported the bullying to teachers or school administrators, and nothing was done. Kids need to know that the adults in their schools will take them seriously and defend them when other students are harassing them.

Finally, I would like to say that I do agree with part of the Superintendent of Schools' previous testimony, which stated that the way to deter bullying is not to impose harsh punishment for offenders, but to engage in active prevention through the maintenance of safe school environments where acceptance of diversity and respect for others is modeled by faculty and expected of students. While defining bullying and creating a process for handling cases of harassment are important, I hope that the next step will be the creation of a comprehensive program to make school environments more accepting and safe for all students.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Alicia Towler

Erin Conner

From: eileen mckee [meileen@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 2:41 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Subject: In Support of HB688

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair

Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

DATE: Friday, March 18, 2011

TIME: 1:45PM

PLACE: Conference Room 225

Testimony from: Eileen McKee

Kihei, HI 96753

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony rather than appear in person. My testimony is in support of House Bill 688-Relating to Education.

I support the passage of House Bill 688. I also encourage the re-insertion of Section 3. The Department of Education should be taking action to enforce a policy (Chapter 19) that has been in place for decades. This bill needs teeth, and unless the DOE acts to safeguard our children, the passage of the bill will not be as effective.

Our children deserve the right to attend school without bullying or harassment. Recent news stories indicate that this type of errant behavior does indeed exist and increases a child's chance of taking his or her own life. If we implement measures that protect them from harm, we can help save young lives.

Mahalo,

Eileen McKee

279 Alaume Street

Kihei, HI 96753

Erin Conner

From: Dara Carlin, M.A. [breaking-the-silence@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 11:04 AM
To: EDU Testimony
Subject: HB 688 HD2 to be heard Friday, 03/18/11 at 1:45pm in Room 225

TO: Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Education Committee Members

FROM: Dara Carlin, M.A.
Domestic Violence Survivor Advocate
881 Akiu Place
Kailua, HI 96734

DATE: 03/18/11

RE: Strong Support for HB688 HD2, Relating to Bullying

Good Afternoon Senators and thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

PLEASE support this measure that would create a statute against bullying. As I testified previously, there is a strong connection between bullying and domestic violence, so much so that I decided to make it the topic of a conference workshop I'll be presenting on the mainland in April.

If bullying and the response to bullying is addressed and taken seriously, my hypothesis is that we'll see a drop in the rates of teen dating violence and domestic violence in our future generations since the EXACT SAME oppressive tactics used by bullies are mirrored in later years in the behaviors of domestic violence perpetrators.

Just as with domestic violence, the problem is not confined to the victim and perpetrator - OUR RESPONSE to the problem is just as important and if we say "zero tolerance" we need to back that up with action (otherwise you're empowering the perpetrator and helping him/her to practice their budding skills at manipulation).

As with any problem, early identification and intervention are key for resolution and preventive measures such as adopting an anti-bullying policy are ideal. Taking an affirmative action to eliminate bullying in our schools will translate to safer environments not only during childhood but will curtail domestic violence by sending the message out early that violence and abuse are not tolerable or acceptable in any way, shape, form, environment or age.

Respectfully,

Dara Carlin, M.A.
Domestic Violence Survivor Advocate

To: Senators Jill Tokuda, Chair & Michelle Kidani Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

**Hearing Info: Senate Committee on Education
Friday, March 18, 1:45 pm
Conference Room 225**

From: Annette Taeko Mente

RE: Testimony In Support of **HB688, HD2** Relating to Education

Aloha Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committee,

I wish to commend the Chair and members for hearing this important bill and offer testify in strong support of HB688, HD2 (with amendments). I work as a planner for the Department of Health, Family Health Services Division, but testify today as a private citizen over growing concerns in our community regarding bullying among our youth. We are all too familiar with attention the issue has received both locally and nationally, including a recent summit held by President Obama.

The social environment for youth today exposes them to increasingly more images and examples of violence and bullying as well as technologies that can readily exact harmful behaviors on others. It is truly incumbent upon our communities and institutions, like the Department of Education (DOE), to be much more aggressive in our efforts to prevent and monitor incidents of bullying.

Although, the DOE has rules and regulations that address bullying, students continue to report that they do not feel they are effective. According to the Youth Behavioral Risk Survey (YRBS), Hawaii has a low rate of youth violence in almost every area except bullying. In 2009, 51% of high school students and 63% of middle school students strongly agreed that harassment and bullying was a problem at their school. The number of youth who have stated that they were afraid to go to school or have missed school due to bullying is much higher than the national average (7.9% vs. 5.0%). Bullying was also identified as one of the top priorities among the youth who participated in the 2010 Children and Youth Summit at Washington Place.

A 2009 DOH FHSD survey of 240 community and agency stakeholders also identified bullying as one of the top issues for children and youth in the state. The issue has become a priority concern as a result.

Although current DOE rules provide for collection of data on school safety, it is woefully inadequate to assess the extent and severity of bullying incidences. The public health adage is "what gets measured, gets done" and normally DOE is quite effective in measuring performance. However, in this case they are not able to produce any accurate or useful data regarding bullying among students; therefore, it's difficult to accept their statements that the current rules and policies are effective in preventing bullying. In fact, the YRBS data that is available, proves just the opposite is true.

While we all understand DOE must address numerous education priorities, students cannot learn effectively in an environment where they do not feel safe and supported. Moreover, YRBS data also indicates that Hawai'i students have some of the highest rates of suicide ideation in the U.S., which can be a consequence of bullying.

DOE is not alone in addressing the bullying issue. There are many community and agency partners that are willing to work with them to address this important concern for our youth.

I encourage the Committee to pass this bill with critical amendments that restore those sections deleted by the House Finance committee (found in HB688, HD1). Those provisions provide for data collection, monitoring, reporting and enforcement of bullying rules and policies. This is the only way that the Legislature can be assured that DOE efforts are making a measurable difference in the lives of our students.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 10:02 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: jmace@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HB688 on 3/18/2011 1:45:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/18/2011 1:45:00 PM HB688

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Jessica Mace
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: jmace@hawaii.rr.com
Submitted on: 3/17/2011

Comments:

Legislation of this type is crucial if we are to begin to resolve the epidemic problem of bullying of youth in our schools. Please do your part to give schools and families the tools they need to raise awareness and give consequences. Thank you.

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2011 2:17 AM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: hrhsf@me.com
Subject: Testimony for HB688 on 3/18/2011 1:45:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/18/2011 1:45:00 PM HB688

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Hector Hoyos Jr. (a.k.a.) HRH-SisterFace
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: hrhsf@me.com
Submitted on: 3/18/2011

Comments:
Good Afternoon Honorable Chair & Senators On This Committee

My Name Is Hector R. Hoyos, I'm In Full Support Of This
Bill,HB688 / HB2

I have all too often in my life seen children, young adults be put pure hell, some for years & years. By them some decide to take there own life's. Bullying is the 1 major thing & evil part of abuses, that cross all types of people. Please Please, With out me taking anymore of your time. Prove to the rest of the country ,like you all been in all areas here in Hawaii...PROTECT OUR YOUTH LGBTQ & STRAIGHT ARTIST, MUSICIANS LEADERS ETC...YOU ALL GET THIS MESSAGE,

I SUPPORT HB688

HRHSF@ME.COM

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2011 5:00 AM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: raew@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HB688 on 3/18/2011 1:45:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/18/2011 1:45:00 PM HB688

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: comments only
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Rae Watanabe
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: raew@hawaii.rr.com
Submitted on: 3/18/2011

Comments:

Please amend HB688 HD2 by restoring HB688 to its HD1 version, including all seven missing sections. If the DOE faculty and staff will not be accountable for the safety of our young people, then how safe can they be? Thank you.

March 17, 2011

Aloha Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Today I would like to speak to the issue of bullying in our public schools and my strong support for HB 688 HD1 and ask that you amend HB 688 HD2 to include all of the language and sections of HD1. It is time that the Hawaii State Legislature takes a public and strong stand against bullying of any and all public school students.

In speaking to the issue of bullying, I encourage the members of the Education Committee to review a story reported by KITV news regarding a school bullying complaint that was filed with the Federal Department of Education due to inaction on the part of the Hawaii Department of Education (<http://www.kitv.com/news/25312007/detail.html>). The report shared the story of a Waianae High School student who was – and perhaps still is – being bullied because of her race. After the school and the district were non-responsive, the parents of the student filed a complaint with the federal government. A review of the complaint led to an agreement with the Hawaii DOE in which the school’s administration and staff were to begin sexual and racial harassment training in January. Hawaii School Superintendent Kathy Matayoshi reportedly said, “The training and notice are intended to make sure the department of education policy is no sexual harassment, no racial harassment. It is not acceptable and we are taking this seriously.”

I have three concerns about the response to this bullying incident. First, it is unacceptable that the local and state school officials took no action and that the student and her family had to bring their complaint to the federal government before something was done.

Second, the resolution in this case seems to assume that bullying is only taking place at this particular school. We know that bullying and the need for training is a statewide issue.

Last, the news report and the resolution seem to suggest that sexual and racial harassment are wrong but other forms of harassment are either acceptable or simply the DOE does not plan to address them. In light of the many recent suicides as a result of students being bullied due to their perceived or actual sexual orientation, I would encourage you to take a public, productive and proactive stance to support and encourage multiple anti-bullying efforts in all of our public schools that address the multiple forms of bullying that take place.

In my role mentoring student teachers and current in-service teachers at the University of Hawaii-Manoa, I spend several days a week in public middle and high schools around the state. During my school visits I frequently hear students call each other “fags” when they are displeased with their friends action or describing an event they do not like as “so

gay”. For example, when a tenth grade biology student was asked to move his seat during class, he expressed his frustration by commenting to the teacher “that’s so gay”. The teacher, who has several years teaching experience, said nothing. When these phrases are ignored by authority figures and are allowed to become part of our everyday language, negative stereotypes and perceptions of the target group are reinforced. Students internalize this hurtful and harmful language, and these incidents foster an environment that tolerates more direct bullying.

As an educator, I understand that we cannot control the actions of all people all of the time but we can educate our students, teachers and administrators on the impact of our actions and our non-actions. One of our primary goals for public education must be to ensure that all students feel safe and valued in their schools. The problem of bullying is invasive in our schools and must be addressed. While the DOE has argued that this legislation is unnecessary because of the existence of Education Policy 4211 and The Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 8, Chapter 9. I argue that, as evidenced by the DOE’s initial inaction in the case of the Waianae High School student, those policies and rules are simply words on paper. Passage of HB 688 HD2, amended to include all of the language of HD1, will require the DOE to be accountable for enacting policies and rules that are currently left unchecked and are often ignored.

Sincerely,

Tara B. O’Neill, PhD
808-226-8044
toneill@hawaii.edu

March 18, 2011

To: Senator Jill Tokuda
and Members of the Senate Education Committee

From: Kayla Avega
Kalaheo High School, Grade 11

Subject: Support of HB688, Bullying and Harassment

Hi, my name is Kayla Avega; I'm currently a junior of Kalaheo High School and I'm a member of the student council (ASK). I strongly believe in this bill and ask for your support. With bullying happening nationwide, many students who are bullied, end up thinking life's not worth it and want to go suicidal. That is why with this bill it'll help those students in need of help and to stop those who are bullying others.

I really believe that with this bill it will let the Department of Education know that this is a serious case that happens to students a lot. Also, students have a hard time letting others know that they need help because they feel that if they say something, that the person who bullies them will do something ten times worse to them. I believe the way to notice that our students are being bullied is by noticing that students that are depressed, academic issues, and low self-esteem. The reason students are getting bullied is because there isn't much supervision happening around the schools. Bullies usually do stuff to students when the adults aren't paying attention which I believe needs to be fixed as soon as possible.

It's known that students that are bullied is harassed verbally, threaten, being a target of rumors, and beaten up. By knowing all of these I believe that the DOE should maintain and enforce a stop to bullying. Hawaii School Health survey taken in February of 2010, 51 percent feel harassed and bullied in school, while 32 percent are harassed and bullied through the internet. It's known that 1.7 million U.S. students from grades 6-10 are being bullied everyday and it increases day by day. With this bill I know that with your support you'll be able to help the students from getting bullied, harassed, and cyber bullied.

Thank you so much for your time and I hope that you pass HB688.

March 18, 2011

To: Senator Jill Tokuda
and Members of the Senate Education Committee

From: Shelly Yoshimura
Kalaheo High School, Grade 12

Subject: Support of HB688, Relating to Education

Hi, my name is Shelly Yoshimura; I'm currently a senior at Kalaheo High School. I am a member of Student Council (ASK). I strongly support HB688, and I would like your support. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and meet high academic standards.

Bullying and harassment, like other disruptive or violent behaviors are forms of conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. The legislature expects appropriate behavior from school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers; they should be the examples for the students to look up to.

The purpose of this Act is to require the DOE to maintain monitor, and enforce anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies and procedures to protect all the students at a public school. I believe with this Act our schools environment will be helpful, safe and students will learn better in school.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I truly hope you will pass House Bill 688.

March 18, 2011

TO: Senator Jill Tokuda
and Members of the Senate Education Committee

FROM: Wren Fukada
Kalaheo High School, Grade 11

SUBJECT: Support of HB688

My name is Wren Fukada and I am a junior at Kalaheo High School. I am testifying in support of HB688.

Bullying and harassment, like other disruptive or violent behaviors are forms of conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Every day, students across the state choose to miss school because they fear of being bullied or harassed. Hawaii has the highest rate of teenage girls who miss school because they were afraid.

Bullying and harassment often leads to depression. Hawaii has the highest rate in the nation of students planning or attempting suicide. In fact, it is two times the nations average.

In a 2009 survey by the Department of Education, 51% of high school students feel bullied and harassed. In the same study, 63% of middle school students identified bullying and harassment as a problem in schools.

Do you remember the massacre that happened at a Columbine High School on April 20, 1999? A student who felt alienated received threats through the internet resulted in a school shooting. Twelve students and one teacher were killed and 21 others were injured. This was an early example of the cyber bullying.

Hawaii is one of six states that do not have anti-bullying legislation. Please pass HB688 so that Hawaii students can feel safe and protected in school.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2011 7:42 AM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: amydonahue@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB688 on 3/18/2011 1:45:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/18/2011 1:45:00 PM HB688

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: comments only
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Amy Donahue
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: amydonahue@gmail.com
Submitted on: 3/18/2011

Comments:

I strongly supported this bill before it was gutted by the House Finance Committee. Please amend HB688 HD2 by restoring HB688 to its HD1 version, including all seven missing sections.

Mahalo,

Amy