

# SB 2269

Measure Title: MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO BEST BUDDIES INTERNATIONAL.  
Report Title: Best Buddies International; Best Buddies Hawaii; Appropriation  
Description: Appropriates funds as a grant to Best Buddies International for the expansion of Best Buddies Hawaii chapters on the islands of Maui and Oahu.  
Companion:  
Package: None  
Current Referral: HMS, WAM  
Introducer(s): GALUTERIA, Baker, Chun Oakland, English, Fukunaga, Kahele, Kidani, Ryan, Shimabukuro, Slom

**Date:** 02/14/2012

**Committee:** Senate Human Services

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** SB 2269 Making an Appropriation to Best Buddies International

**Purpose of Bill:** Appropriates funds as a grant to Best Buddies International for the expansion of Best Buddies Hawaii chapters on the islands of Maui and Oahu.

**Department's Position:**

The Department of Education supports SB 2269, as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Supplemental Budget for Fiscal Year 2012-2013.

It is commendable that the goal of the nonprofit organization, Best Buddies, is to "establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities."



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
919 ALA MOANA BOULEVARD, ROOM 113  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814  
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543  
February 14, 2012

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services  
Twenty-Sixth Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Senators Chun Oakland and Ihara, and Members of the Committees:

**SUBJECT: SB 2269 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO BEST BUDDIES INTERNATIONAL.**

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD) **SUPPORTS SB 2269.** The purpose of the bill is to support efforts of Best Buddies International in Hawaii by appropriating funds to expand Best Buddies Chapters.

Best Buddies has been very visual and successful in the Maui Community and is getting a strong foothold on Oahu as an aspiring program for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The Best Buddies program provides opportunities for individuals with I/DD to engage in one-on-one interactions, establish long-lasting friendships, and participate in social networking. Opportunities such as these are welcomed and needed to enable individuals with I/DD to fully participate in their community and have a life rich in positive relationships.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of SB 2269.**

Sincerely,

  
Liz Ann Salvador  
Chair

  
Waynette K.Y. Cabral, MSW  
Executive Administrator



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February 13, 2012

Honorable Members of the Senate

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of SB 2269. I am past President of the Maui Best Buddies Board of Directors and have firsthand experience on how this program has benefited the youth and families we have served on Maui. The gaining of self-esteem and a new way to integrate socially and enhance the life experience of the participants has been invaluable.

Through the leadership and excellent fiscal management of Executive Director Michael McCormick, Best Buddies Hawaii has been able to gain a foothold in Hawaii but needs additional funding to expand what we now know is a very valuable resource to those served.

I urge you to consider approval of the appropriation of \$100,000 for expanding the Maui and Oahu programs for fiscal year 2012-2013.

Aloha,

Grant E. Howe, CCIM  
Past President  
Board of Directors  
Best Buddies Maui Chapter

*Testimony of  
Anthony K. Shriver, Founder and Chairman  
Best Buddies International  
February 13, 2012*

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SB2269, Making an Appropriation to Best Buddies International to fund our inclusion programs for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Hawaii.

I have known ever since I first visited Hawaii that Best Buddies would flourish here because of the generosity of spirit and caring nature of the people of Hawaii. Hawaii has abundant natural beauty. How well I recall travelling up into the hills to the volcanoes, the gorgeous beaches, and the powerful and alluring surf. What has stayed within me, though, is the welcome we got from the people. Each person we encountered paid excellent attention to us and made us feel right at home.

So, I am not surprised to tell you that, Best Buddies has been flourishing here since we launched our first programs on Maui in 2008. Our school-based programs have had a positive impact on over 4,000 children and adults. While we know the need here for Best Buddies is great, we also know the ability of the people to meet that need is strong – so long as we secure the funds that will ensure that every child with special needs is educated in an inclusive setting.

We know that it is the development of social skills that best prepares students with intellectual disabilities for life on the job and in the community after school. Yet, without Best Buddies, most special education students never have the chance to develop those skills through interaction with their typical peers. In Hawaii, nearly 32% of students with disabilities spend more than 60% of their time in school separated from their non-disabled peers ([www.ideadata.org](http://www.ideadata.org)). Hawaii's students with disabilities are separated from their non-disabled peers more than any of the other 50 states and territories with the exception of Guam.

With an appropriation from the state, we can expand to serve even more students in more schools. Specifically, state support would fund an office on Oahu that would manage Best Buddies chapters at 15 middle and high schools and involve at least 300 additional students.

I am proud of the work that Best Buddies Hawaii has done under the leadership of our State Director, Mike McCormick. We have proven ourselves a worthy partner of the state's investment, and I hope you will pass this request for funding.

Thank you.

Testimony for SB 2269  
February 12, 2012

Good afternoon, my name is Sarah Man and I'm President of the Best Buddies Oahu Advisory Board. Many years ago I was a member of Best Buddies in Indiana. Upon moving back to Hawaii two years ago with my husband and family I was shocked to hear that Best Buddies was not on Oahu. I immediately put together a board of community leaders in an attempt to get funding to start local chapters.

This is extremely important to me and my family. I have a seven year old daughter with autism. We must lay the groundwork necessary for children with Intellectual Disabilities to be included in the community. Best Buddies is **hands down** the best program for inclusion.

Quite often, young people with intellectual disabilities are forgotten, left behind both academically and culturally. Whether it's sitting alone in the cafeteria, isolating themselves in the back of the bus, or fearing being waylaid by taunts and teasing by their general education peers, these young people merely want to fit in. A recent study revealed that 83 percent of children and young adults with disabilities in this age group have undergone some type of bullying ranging from being sworn at to sexual abuse. (Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Bullying Among Special Education Students with Intellectual Disabilities, Reiter and Lapidot-Leftler 2007).

It is sobering to realize that they are segregated from their peers, left in an isolated world void of friendship and interaction. Often their only recreation is watching television, removed from the active world around them. (Mental Retardation, "I'd Rather Watch TV": An Examination of Physical Activity in Adults With Mental Retardation, Georgia C. Frey, Alice M. Buchanan, and Dawn D. Rosser Sandt). Students with special needs hear about sporting events, dances, school clubs and social service days, but these activities are not yet fully available to them. "Disabled young people are often left out of the less formal 'rites of passages' such as joining a sports team, courting, learning to drive the family vehicle. This exclusion distinguishes young people with disabilities from all other groups of young people" (Groce, 2004).

Best Buddies introduces socialization opportunities and job coaching, providing the necessary tools for people with IDD to become more independent and, consequently, more included in the community.

Best Buddies High Schools has paired students with IDD in one-to-one friendships with high school students. By introducing Best Buddies into public and private high schools, participants are crossing the invisible line that too often separates those with disabilities from those without. In today's middle schools, students with IDD often enter the same building and walk the same hallways as their peers, but they are left out of social activities.

Please consider this very important bill. It is paramount for the future of our social fabric.

Sincerely,

Sarah Burke Man  
President of Best Buddies Oahu Board  
2115 Kamehameha Ave  
Honolulu, HI 96822  
808.469.2881

If you ask a student in middle or high school “what happened at school today?” the student will most likely think of who he talked to in the halls, in class, who he sat with at lunch, at an assembly or a sporting event. When an adult is asked to recount her high school days, she thinks of whether she felt a general sense of belonging. Did she feel noticed, involved, did people care? Most of us still have friends we made in high school. Many of those friends became our social support network during life’s ups and downs. The social aspects of middle and high school stay with us throughout our adult lives.

Now please imagine two scenarios.

In the first scenario, you attend classes at a high school on Oahu, but you are not included or involved in the social aspects of the school. You have lunch in a portable classroom far away from the “hub” of the school with your teacher and one or two classmates. You’ve never met any of the kids you hear about on the school’s news announcements. You never go to the sports events. You get on the yellow bus immediately after the school bell rings and never participate in extracurricular activities. Imagine watching television shows that depict teenagers “hanging out” with friends. You think, “why isn’t my life like that?”

Now imagine eating lunch in the cafeteria with a group of with kids. Imagine having typical teenagers say “hi” to you in the hallways. Imagine attending a school basketball game or a pizza party with some of these same teens. Imagine having contact with these new friends outside of school as well. How different your life would be. Well, this scenario is happening now at Kapolei Middle and High School on Oahu thanks to Best Buddies. Other schools would like Best Buddies chapters, but funding is needed to get these programs up and running.

Best Buddies is an international program that promotes friendships between youth with and without intellectual disabilities. Please consider Senate Bill 2269 to expand the opportunities described above to other schools in our State. Senate Bill 2269 requests a small investment of state funds that will provide life-changing experiences for young people in Hawaii. These friendships are a “game-changer” in promoting acceptance in our schools and our communities. Please consider being part of the change.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information about the benefits of Best Buddies for youth with and without intellectual disabilities.

Dr. Rhonda Black

Professor of Special Education, University of Hawaii at Manoa

Best Buddies Advisory Board



Hello.

I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Mike McCormick and I am the State Director for Best Buddies Hawaii. Best Buddies Hawaii was established in 2008 with an office at the J.W. Cameron Center in Wailuku.

Best Buddies Hawaii is a state affiliate of Best Buddies International, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 1989. Our mission is to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Best Buddies Hawaii serves 457 participants with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities in seven schools in Hawaii. There are currently one middle school chapter and six high school chapters in Hawaii which positively impact the lives of over 4,570 people in the state by involving parents, siblings, and friends.

Best Buddies Hawaii is the only organization in Hawaii dedicated to providing friendship opportunities for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our unique mission and innovative programs fill a void in the educational system for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, giving them the chance to develop social skills that aid in their employment, independence, and community integration.

We are grateful to have support from Maui County and the City and County of Honolulu, as well as a number of corporations, foundations, and individuals. We would like to partner with the state in order to serve more Hawaiians who are in need.

We are asking for support from the state in the form of a Grant-in-Aid for the Best Buddies Hawaii Oahu Project. This funding will allow Best Buddies to open a field office on Oahu and to continue to provide valuable support to youth with IDD by matching students with IDD in one-to-one friendships with their typical peers. We would be able to support 15 middle and high school chapters with an office on Oahu, providing friendship opportunities to 300 students with and without IDD. These friendships combat isolation and provide opportunities for leadership and social skills development.

Participation in Best Buddies helps Hawaiian youth with IDD can become more employable, more independent, and more included in their communities.

We thank you for your continued support of Best Buddies Hawaii.

C

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 13, 2012 12:39 PM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** CONKAY@HAWAII.RR.COM  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB2269 on 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM  
**Attachments:** BB

Testimony for HMS 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM SB2269

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: Yes  
Submitted by: CONNIE SMITH  
Organization: BEST BUDDIES  
E-mail: [CONKAY@HAWAII.RR.COM](mailto:CONKAY@HAWAII.RR.COM)  
Submitted on: 2/13/2012

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Ashley Ono and it is my honor to serve as the Chapter President of a new club at my school called Best Buddies. Through working with Best Buddies my life has been changed. I travelled across the country to receive leadership training at a major university, I have worked closely with teachers, administrators and other students to better the lives of students with disabilities at my school, and most importantly I have made a new friend. As a Peer Buddy at Kapolei High School this year I was matched in a one-to-one friendship with a fellow student who has a disability, a Buddy. My Buddy's name is Connor and I'm really thankful to have him in my life. My friendship with Connor has taught me how important friendship is. Whenever I see him in the mornings or during lunch his face just lights up and he waves at me. Seeing how happy he gets whenever he sees me shows me how much I mean to him. And at the same time I benefit from this friendship as well. Whenever I am around him it's impossible to be in a bad mood, because he is always in such a great mood, like nothing can bring him down. I know spreading Best Buddies mission of friendship across the state of Hawaii will change lives for the better because it has changed mine. It has been a blessing to have a Buddy and this club in my life and I can't wait for my friends and neighbors throughout the state to have such a wonderful opportunity.

February 13, 2012

TO: The Honorable Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Committee on Human Services  
Tuesday, February 14, 2012  
1:25 p.m., Conference Room 016

Regarding: **SB 2269 Making an Appropriation to Best Buddies  
International**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB 2269. The purpose of this Bill is to appropriate funds to Best Buddies for the expansion of Best Buddies Hawaii Chapters on the islands of Maui and Oahu.

Best Buddies matches students with intellectual disabilities in one to one friendships with high school students helping to cross the invisible that that often separates those with disabilities from those without. My son, Isaiah, is currently the Vice President of the Baldwin High School Best Buddies Chapter on Maui and as a parent I would like to say how important this organization is. They have provided Isaiah many leadership development opportunities and life time experiences that he will carry with him for the rest of his life. Through his association with Best Buddies, he has become a changed person and a confident leader. His friendship with his fellow student who has a disability has humbled him and Isaiah has been blessed by this one to one friendship. I humbly ask for your support of this Bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 2269.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheri Yamaguchi  
PO Box 880213  
Pukalani, HI 96788  
Phone: (808) 276-5197

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 13, 2012 10:14 AM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** alohaanella@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB2269 on 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM

Testimony for HMS 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM SB2269

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Anella Mark  
Organization: Individual  
E-mail: [alohaanella@gmail.com](mailto:alohaanella@gmail.com)  
Submitted on: 2/13/2012

**Comments:**

Aloha Senators

In today's society social isolation and lack of support or purpose in life will bring about disparities in the health and well-being of individuals who are affected by it. As a parent with a child who has down syndrome your first thoughts are will he/she make a difference or be instrumental in society. Well the answer is yes due in part because of Best Buddies of Hawaii. This organization allows individuals to become who they are, accepted by their peers, and allows them to accomplish the impossible. This organization develops people with disabilities to turn their lives into a productive, purposeful, and meaningful life. It allows individuals with disabilities to develop the confidence to see that they are not different but their differences make a difference. If it was not for Best Buddies

International individuals like my son would not have goals and aspirations to strive for. This organization is the difference between living a life of purpose or a life of dependency. You see Best Buddies prepares people with disabilities to live independently, have a choice and a voice, along with contributing to society through job opportunities. If you would ask me the day my child was born where I would see him twenty years later? Honestly it would not be where he is today. I would never imagine the doors of opportunity that Best Buddies has given my child. This child is self-confident, self-sufficient, and self-reliant. My son has developed into a role model, leader, and most of all considerate individual.

He doesn't see the differences in the differences of individuals. He sees opportunity to live and thrive in school, work, and the community. He has made a difference in the lives of people because Best Buddies has made the difference in his life. This organization has made a difference in many lives here on Maui.

But Hawaii needs Best Buddies to impact the whole state and the individuals and families who desperately want their children to be productive individuals in society along with having meaningful

relationships in life. It is with great anticipation that the Senate supports this bill because Best Buddies

of Hawaii's efforts will not go unnoticed. As a public servant of the people vote yes to Bill 2269 because it is all about doing the greater good for all and make a difference in the lives of people for the greater good of Hawaii.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2012 10:13 AM  
To: HMS Testimony  
Cc: paulmarkmaui@gmail.com  
Subject: Testimony for SB2269 on 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM

Testimony for HMS 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM SB2269

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Paul Mark  
Organization: Individual  
E-mail: [paulmarkmaui@gmail.com](mailto:paulmarkmaui@gmail.com)  
Submitted on: 2/13/2012

Comments:  
Aloha

As a parent of a child with Downs Syndrome and also a Board member of Best Buddies Maui I am writing you to ask for your support with out hesitation for Senate Bill 2269.

Best Buddies is a wonderful program that reaches out and not only supports students with intellectual dissabilites but provides numerous opportunities for them to become fully intergrated in school and within the community.

As a parent who forced the school system to provide services for my child with Downs Syndrome in the general education classroom (inclusion) every years end the teachers even the most angry ones at first said the same thing: that "the class learned far more from Emilio than Emilio learned from them". That's what I like best about Best Buddies. The participants and volunteers learn and benefit as much if not more than the client! You can't ask for better than that!

My son has grown so much from the opportunities Best Buddies has provided from the small things like routine phone calls, daily contacts and monthly gatherings to the big stuff like leadership conference where Emilio was able to write down his experinces into a speech. He was asked to give that speech at the leadership conference and has since spoken at different schools, conferences, and council meetings here on Maui.

Best Buddies has certainly helped my son to grow more independent and to become more self confident and self reliant. He is graduating this year with out a "real" diploma but he is one of the few graduates I know that is living on his own, in his own aprtment and supporting himself with assistance and working part time.

Please support Senate Bill 2269

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 11, 2012 4:03 PM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** lkakatsu@hawaii.rr.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB2269 on 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM

Testimony for HMS 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM SB2269

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Lynn Murakami-Akatsuka  
Organization: Individual  
E-mail: [lkakatsu@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:lkakatsu@hawaii.rr.com)  
Submitted on: 2/11/2012

**Comments:**

I strongly support SB 2269 to appropriate funds as a grant to Best Buddies International for expansion of its Hawaii chapters on the islands of Maui and Oahu.

I previously was the Planner for the Department of Health's (DOH) Developmental Disabilities Division (DDD), Case Management and Information Services Branch (CMISB). We had a similar program called Sunny Buddies for young and older adults with developmental disabilities to partner with an adult volunteer (from the University of Hawaii, School of Medicine) to interested DDD participants. I saw the positive outcomes of the friendships and outreach made between the medical students and their Sunny Buddy friends.

I am delighted that Best Buddies International had initiated a Best Buddies Hawaii within the Department of Education, in particular at Kapolei High School. I work with a colleague in my current DOH program whose daughter is the chair of the Best Buddies program at her school. Best Buddies Hawaii is dedicated to fostering the social integration of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. To this end, Kapolei High School has made a difference in the lives of their youths - to change social norms and to extend friendships to individuals who may not be included because of their disabilities. I heard a heartwarming comment that when an individual was asked what was the best part of Best Buddies, it was "I now have a friend."

If my sister (who is now in her late 40's and has an intellectual disability) had this program at her high school in the 1980's, this would have made a world of difference in her social development and confidence.

I strongly support SB 2269. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

## ChunOakland3 - Michael

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 13, 2012 1:42 PM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** alohaanella@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB2269 on 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM  
**Attachments:** Senate Bill 2269.docx

Testimony for HMS 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM SB2269

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Anella Mark  
Organization: Individual  
E-mail: [alohaanella@gmail.com](mailto:alohaanella@gmail.com)  
Submitted on: 2/13/2012

Comments:



Aloha Senators

In today's society social isolation and lack of support or purpose in life will bring about disparities in the health and well-being of individuals who are affected by it. As a parent with a child who has down syndrome your first thoughts are will he/she make a difference or be instrumental in society. Well the answer is yes due in part because of Best Buddies of Hawaii. This organization allows individuals to become who they are, accepted by their peers, and allows them to accomplish the impossible. This organization develops people with disabilities to turn their lives into a productive, purposeful, and meaningful life. It allows individuals with disabilities to develop the confidence to see that they are not different but their differences make a difference. If it was not for Best Buddies International individuals like my son would not have goals and aspirations to strive for. This organization is the difference between living a life of purpose or a life of dependency. You see Best Buddies prepares people with disabilities to live independently, have a choice and a voice, along with contributing to society through job opportunities. If you would ask me the day my child was born where I would see him twenty years later? Honestly it would not be where he is today. I would never imagine the doors of opportunity that Best Buddies has given my child. This child is self-confident, self-sufficient, and self-reliant. My son has developed into a role model, leader, and most of all considerate individual. He doesn't see the differences in the differences of individuals. He sees opportunity to live and thrive in school, work, and the community. He has made a difference in the lives of people because Best Buddies has made the difference in his life. This organization has made a difference in many lives here on Maui. But Hawaii needs Best Buddies to impact the whole state and the individuals and families who desperately want their children to be productive individuals in society along with having meaningful relationships in life. It is with great anticipation that the Senate supports this bill because Best Buddies of Hawaii's efforts will not go unnoticed. As a public servant of the people vote yes to Bill 2269 because it is all about doing the greater good for all and make a difference in the lives of people for the greater good of Hawaii.

*Aloha Committee Members,*

*I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong support of SB 2269. My name is Maureen McCormick but most people remember me as Marcia from the television show The Brady Bunch.*

*Although I don't live in your beautiful state I travel to Hawaii 2 or 3 times a year speaking to many hundreds of students at schools on Maui and Oahu.*

*It is a privilege for me to encourage young students to volunteer and become members of Best Buddies Hawaii, a great organization that is making such an important difference in Hawaii.*

*I hope you will support this bill because it will allow many more young people in Hawaii the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life. Best Buddies does that by creating inclusive schools in Hawaii. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have changed as a result of Best Buddies.*

*Mahalo for your support!*

*Sincerely,  
Maureen McCormick*

# LATE

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 13, 2012 6:55 PM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** btrecker@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB2269 on 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM

**Categories:** Red Category

Testimony for HMS 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM SB2269

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Barbara Trecker  
Organization: Individual  
E-mail: [btrecker@hawaii.edu](mailto:btrecker@hawaii.edu)  
Submitted on: 2/13/2012

**Comments:**

Best Buddies Hawaii provides a unique experience for intellectually disabled young people in Hawaii - a valuable opportunity they really cannot get anywhere else quite like this. The program fosters friendships between peers, to promote understanding and acceptance ... and valuable outlook experiences for both sides of the friendships.  
Senate Bill 2269 calls for a small investment of state funds that will provide life-changing experiences for young people in Hawaii. Please consider this bill in order to expand the opportunities for more schools and more students in Hawaii.

February 14, 2012

Testimony in support of SB2269

I write, as a private citizen, in support of SB2269 MAKING ANN APPROPRIATION TO BEST BUDDIES INTERNATIONAL

I have observed the Best Buddies Program on Maui as they have participated on our Panels for the Maui Disability Alliance Legislative Forum and at our annual BIG MAC High School Transition Event for students with special Needs.

The Best Buddy program fosters inclusion for students with special needs by giving them a peer buddy at their school.

This relationship of "Buddy" benefits the student with the special needs but also equally benefits the student who is being the "Best Buddy".

The practice of fully including people with special needs (full inclusion) is greatly benefitted by the BEST BUDDIES program. I recommend the programs expansion to all the High Schools in the state of Hawaii. Best Buddies fosters community inclusion, school inclusion, friendships, compassion and understanding in our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB2269

Sincerely,

Mary Matsukawa

**LATE**

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 14, 2012 9:31 AM  
**To:** HMS Testimony  
**Cc:** bellardj001@hawaii.rr.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB2269 on 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM

Testimony for HMS 2/14/2012 1:25:00 PM SB2269

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Joan Bellard  
Organization: Individual  
E-mail: [bellardj001@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:bellardj001@hawaii.rr.com)  
Submitted on: 2/14/2012

**Comments:**

I support SB2269. As a parent of an adult with developmental disability, I wished we had this program while she was in school. The Best Buddies Program has been one of the best and most important programs to be brought to our High and Middle Schools. It has not only enhanced the lives of our Special Needs children but also those of the students who volunteered. This is a win win situation for our childrens education. Please get this bill passed.

Thank you, Joan Bellard