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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 2535, SD1 – RELATING TO INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

February 28, 2012

WIL OKABE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Ige and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association opposes SB 2535, SD1, which directs the Department of Education to devise four standardized bell schedules for the state's elementary, middle, and high schools.

From our perspective, instructional time is the teacher work day. It is clearly laid out in the Master Agreement and agreed to by the Department and Board of Education. Additionally, lawmakers have routinely stated, during the current legislative session, that the State Legislature should not be micromanaging the Department of Education, particularly with regard to in-school operations at the local level. Yet, time and time again, policymakers have violated that tenet, first by mandating implementation of performance evaluations and now with the compulsory realignment of bell schedules.

While standardized bell schedules may be convenient for parents with children at multiple campuses, they are likely to discount the particularities around which schools base their current schedules. For example, not all schools have the same lunch or break schedule, owing in part to stark variances in the size of school populations. In fact, Act 51 allowed schools to craft bell schedules that accommodate their own needs and the schedules of other schools in a given complex area. It should also be noted that instructional time is subject to collective bargaining. Accordingly, we feel that system-wide standardization of bell schedules, including any attempt to redefine instructional time, should undergo the established practice of the negotiations process to ensure that instructional time increases, when enacted, are accompanied by corresponding hikes in compensation.

HSTA fully supports efforts to provide equal opportunity and access to students pursuing different academic pathways. Let us work together collaboratively to design schools that are the sign and signal of our society's highest standards of excellence. Those extolling education reform may fail to acknowledge that teachers tasked with day-to-day instruction are best equipped to determine the needs of their classrooms. In Hawaii, where teachers' rights to collectively bargain fair wages, benefits and working conditions are in the Constitution, their efforts to protect those rights, should not be considered a barrier to student achievement.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to this bill.

Senate Committee  
**Ways and Means**

Senator Ige - Chair  
Senator Kidani - Vice Chair

February 22, 2012

Winton Schoneman  
Bubbies Homemade Ice Cream and Desserts Franchisee

**IN STRONG OPPOSITION TO SB2535SD1 RELATING TO INSTRUCTIONAL TIME**

Aloha Chair Ige and Vice Chair Kidani, members of the Committee, I apologize for not being present to provide this testimony. I am a small business person. Since the inception of Act 51 I have been involved with our public schools, working at the school level as SCC member/Chair, as a mentor and as an advocate. I am unique in one respect. Although my daughter graduated from public school, I have no children or grand children in Hawaii's public or private schools. In my involvement with our schools I have been guided by one commitment...do what is best for the students. I am in strong opposition to SB2535 and its companion bill HB2207 for the following reasons:

1. As written, the definition of instructional time is overly vague and lacks accountability. Specifically the definition refers to several standard learning environments and then has a catch all phrase "and all other activities in which there is a related general learner outcome attached to such time". Here are the referred to general learner outcomes from the DOE website:

"The GLOs should be an integral part of the school culture as the GLOs do not exist in isolation. The six GLOs are:

- **Self-directed Learner** (The ability to be responsible for one's own learning)
- **Community Contributor** (The understanding that it is essential for human beings to work together)
- **Complex Thinker** (The ability to demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving)
- **Quality Producer** (The ability to recognize and produce quality performance and quality products)
- **Effective Communicator** (The ability to communicate effectively)
- **Effective and Ethical User of Technology** (The ability to use a variety of technologies effectively and ethically) "

As you can see, the GLO's are by design very vague. By this definition, I could create any myriad of activities to fit the GLO's. Some examples might be:

- Being a member of a school club or organization
- After school job
- Playing video games
- Doing crossword puzzles

The GLO's are so broad as to constitute encompassing every activity imaginable without an adequate review or approval process making accountability virtually impossible.

I was involved in the discussion and crafting of the original legislation for Act 167. At that time we had discussed defining instructional time as learning time associated with an approved curriculum. By tying "approved curriculum" to learning time, there is an implicit requirement for review of the concept, means and possible outcomes of the exercise contemplated.

2. Removal of the requirement for one thousand and eighty hours of instruction per year flies in the face of reason, logic and comparison with data from schools around the world.
  - Hawaii schools rank very low when compared to US schools in the amount of time allotted to learning. When compared to worldwide schools we are at the bottom.
  - The following article was widely reported Feb. 17, 2012:

"HONOLULU (AP) - The union representing Hawaii's public school teachers has reached a tentative agreement on a key element of the state's Race to the Top grant that has recently been put in jeopardy because of unsatisfactory progress on promised reforms.

Hawaii State Teachers Association Executive Director Al Nagasako said a tentative agreement was reached Thursday on extended learning time for schools in Nanakuli and Waianae on Oahu and Kau, Keaau, and Pahoia on the Big Island. The schools are in zones targeted by Race to the Top reforms.

The plan calls for one hour more per day Monday through Thursday and 12 additional days of teaching training. That would result in about 18% more in compensation for the extra time.

Union members in the zones will vote Feb. 27."

Reading this article implies, to me, that someone, somewhere believes that increasing the amount of time students spend in school, in class, with a teacher will result in better outcomes for the students. The question then becomes, if it is good for these students, why not all? I believe that the answer lies not in would it be beneficial for the students, nor in do we have the ability, nor in do we have the where with all. Instead it lies in where our commitments are.

Therefore, I urge the Senate Ways and Means Committee to defer SB2535SD1 due to the lack of accountability and controls inherent in the proposed definition of "instructional time". Additionally, by having the foresight to maintain adequate instructional time per current law, future generations may see various savings from reduced under-employment,

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unemployment, family disintegration and a reduction in other societal ills by having highly educated communities.

I am not adverse to having standardized bell schedules.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Winton Schoneman