

**SB 2598****PROPOSING AMENDMENTS TO THE HAWAII STATE CONSTITUTION RELATING TO THE
ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE BONDS**

Senate Committee on Education/Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

February 3, 2012

2:15 p.m.

Room 225

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs submits testimony in **SUPPORT** of SB2598, which proposes a constitutional amendment to authorize the State to issue special purpose revenue bonds to assist charter schools, not-for-profit corporations that support charter schools, and community development financial institutions that support charter schools. The proposed amendments will begin to resolve long-neglected problems and issues with financing charter school facilities.

In the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) model law, one of several key components for supporting public charter school facility needs is a bonding authoring. The NAPCS model law states that “Public charter schools should have equal access to all of the relevant tax-exempt bonding authorities in a state or have their own bonding authority (2009, p. 24).” OHA supports SB2598 because it will afford public charter schools and their governing boards, non-profit corporations that support charter schools, and community development institutions that support charter schools equal access. This bill brings parity to the efforts of public charter schools to provide quality public education to our communities.

OHA urges the committees to PASS SB2598. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



February 3, 2012
2:15 p.m.
Conference Room 225

TESTIMONY TO
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION and
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & LABOR

RE: SB 2598 – PROPOSING AMENDMENTS TO THE HAWAII STATE CONSTITUTION
RELATING TO THE ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE BONDS.

Dear Chairs Tokuda and Hee, Vice Chairs Kidani and Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committees:

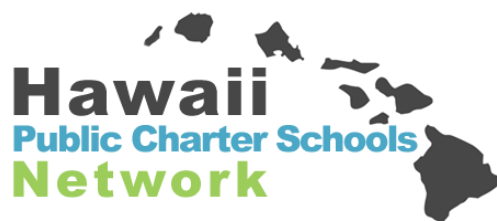
My name is Robert Witt and I am executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 99 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 33,000 elementary and secondary students statewide.

The Association **strongly supports Senate Bill 2598** which proposes a constitutional amendment to authorize the State to issue special purpose revenue bonds to assist charter schools, not-for-profit corporations that support charter schools, and community development financial institutions that support charter schools.

The legislature deemed, and voters reinforced, that the issuance of special purpose revenue bonds to private schools is in the public interest. For almost a decade, private schools have judiciously utilized this financing tool as a strategy for leveraging capital funds for improvement and enrichment projects. Special purpose revenue bonds do not divert funds from the public school system and this arrangement has spawned many millions of dollars in construction on campuses large and small across the state. The extension of this valuable authorization to charter schools will multiply the economic and educational benefits already realized.

Private schools in Hawaii serve everyday families from all walks of life and present parents the opportunity to choose a school, educational philosophy, or campus environment that supports their child's strengths. Similarly, choice and flexibility are core principles of charter schools.

Hawaii Association of Independent Schools appreciates the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 2598 and the mission of charter schools in Hawaii.



THE SENATE
THE TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2012
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR
Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

DATE: Friday, February 03, 2012
TIME: 2:15 PM
PLACE: Conference Room 225
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Chairs Tokuda and Hee, Vice Chairs Kidani and Shimabukuro, and members of the Committees on Education and Judiciary and Labor,

RE: SB2598 - RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS, **In support**

The Hawaii Public Charter School Network (Network) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that exists to advance high quality public education in Hawaii by advocating for, and providing supports to, public charter schools. The HPCSN represents all 31 of Hawaii's public charter schools, and their 9,000+ public charter school students.

The HPCSN is in support of SB2598, Special Purpose Revenue Bonds for charter schools. The legislature recognized that funding charter school facilities was a critical issue when it passed the needs based facilities funding formula in SB1174 last session. This bill allows for more ways to meet Hawaii's constitutional obligation to public charter schools as stated in Article X, section 1 of the, Hawaii State Constitution, "The State shall provide for the establishment, support and control of a statewide system of public schools free from sectarian control, a state university, public libraries and such other educational institutions as may be deemed desirable, including physical facilities therefor."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynn Finnegan". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Lynn Finnegan
Executive Director

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, February 03, 2012 2:11 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: wheapcs@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2598 on 2/3/2012 2:15:00 PM

Testimony for EDU/JDL 2/3/2012 2:15:00 PM SB2598

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Curtis Muraoka
Organization: West Hawaii Explorations Academy
E-mail: wheapcs@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/3/2012

Comments:
SB2598
Relating to Special Purpose Revenue Bonds for Public Charter Schools

Position: Support

Aloha Esteemed Chairs Tokuda and Hee, Vice-Chairs Kidani and Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committees on Education, and Judiciary and Labor:

I support providing Special Purpose Revenue Bonds as an option to assist in developing charter school facilities.

In the case of West Hawaii Explorations Academy (WHEA), we are faced with having to relocate due to planned expansion of Kona International Airport as soon as 2013. We have been actively pursuing a capital campaign for public and private funding, and are seeing first hand that reliable options do not really exist to finance facilities benefiting charter school students. In addition, we have completed our planning and design phase, finished all necessary assessments, and grading permits are in hand. WHEA is shovel-ready.

If SPRBs were available, WHEA could have some method of reliably seeking a level of support to finance our relocation efforts.

I realize that the intent of SPRBs is the support of institutions outside government that serve a common good, however even though charter schools are public, they have not been provided avenues to get the same public support as other public institutions. Therefore, I urge you to consider providing this avenue to support schools like WHEA that have real needs, yet have limited pathways to address those needs.

Sincerely,
Curtis Muraoka, Co-Director
West Hawaii Explorations Academy Public Charter School