



The Judiciary, State of Hawaii

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

The Hon. Roy M. Takumi, Chair
The Hon. Takashi Ohno, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 13, 2013
2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

by
R. Mark Browning
Deputy Chief Judge, Senior Judge
Family Court of the First Circuit

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 190, Relating to Truancy

Purpose: Establishes a working group, administratively attached to the Judiciary, to study methods to prevent or control truancy in elementary schools.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports the intent of this bill. We respectfully strongly recommend that this working group should be administratively attached to either the Dept. of Education (DOE) or the Office of the Attorney General (AG). Both of those offices have the necessary authority, expertise, and network contacts and/or working relationships with the list of invitees noted in this bill. Furthermore, if a "community truancy board" is successfully established, it would be properly under the DOE's administrative control rather than the Judiciary's.

The Judiciary strongly agrees with the preamble of this bill regarding the importance of a basic education to both the elementary school child as well as the health and economic well-being of our community. Upon the planning and implementation of an appropriate form of a "community truancy board," the family court will of course work collaboratively with the DOE



House Bill No. 190, Relating to Truancy
House Committee on Education
Wednesday, February 13, 2013, 2:00 p.m.
Page 2

and the AG to ensure a seamless connection between the court and the work of the community board.

At this time, we are aware that schools, feeling the urgency on behalf of the child, may feel hampered by requirements dictated by the DOE and the AG. After the pre-petition process which the family court has nothing to do with, they then are subject to the standard court period between the petition's filing and the first hearing based on the need to provide adequate service and notice to all the parties. Meanwhile, the elementary school child, who is often not intentionally being a truant but may be missing school due to family circumstances, languishes without the educational foundation necessary to healthy development.

In the last calendar year, we dealt with approximately 60 court hearings for truancy cases and we are committed to continuing our recognition of the importance of these cases. Particularly with this bill's emphasis on elementary schools (which we agree should be the grades to focus on), placement of this working group under the DOE or the AG would better ensure the success of this working group. Development of an administrative board for an executive agency is not within the kuleana of the Judiciary. But, even if this were, we could not possibly have the expertise and understanding of the myriad elementary schools and their communities throughout this state. However, the family court would be more than willing to be a member of the group to lend the expertise that we do have.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/13/2013

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 0190 RELATING TO TRUANCY

Purpose of Bill: Establishes a working group administratively attached to the judiciary to study methods to prevent or control truancy in elementary schools, including the creation of a community truancy board.

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) supports HB 0190. The Department is poised to support the judiciary by participating in a working group to study methods to prevent or control the problem of truancy in elementary schools.

Along with other partnership agencies and organizations, the Department would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of guidelines for the establishment of community truancy boards. Our participation would help to ensure that the guidelines reflect current Department initiatives and programs that address improving school attendance.

841 Bishop St., Suite 301
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813



Telephone: 808 926-1530
Contact@HEECoalition.org

House Committee on Education
Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
Representative Takashi Ohno, Vice Chair

February 13, 2013

Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Ohno and Committee Members,

This testimony is submitted in support of HB190 with suggested amendments.

The Hui for Excellence in Education (HE'E) is a diverse coalition of over 40 parent and community organizations dedicated to improving student achievement by increasing family and community engagement and partnerships in our schools. Our member list is attached.

The Coalition has been looking closely at school safety issues, as families and the community all agree that we need to create a positive, safe environment at schools so that our children and learn. The BOE has included reducing absenteeism as a primary indicator of student achievement in their updated Strategic Plan. We believe that truancy/absenteeism is an early indicator of students potentially taking the wrong path and low student achievement. We also know that focusing on these issues at the elementary level can have a positive impact on students as the move into secondary schools. Therefore, we strongly support efforts to keep students in school and to focus on the issue at the elementary age.

We would ask that the Committee consider the following amendments in this legislation:

- 1) Recommend that one of the working group members, as described in Section 2 (a), be a member of a parent group or a community organization that is focused on education or family support services.
- 2) Because transitions are when students have a difficult time making adjustments, in particular, the transition between elementary school and intermediate/middle school we recommend in Section (2) (5) (d) (4), the

language be adjusted to “Focus specifically on the elementary school level and transition to intermediate/high school.”

- 3) Recommend that in creating the guidelines for establish a community truancy board, in Section 2 (5) (d), the working group “Review and utilize review current research on truancy”, to help inform the guideline process.
- 4) Recommend that the working group speak with the DOE Peer Mediation program which provides student-to-student mediation training and programs in secondary schools. The program administrator may have some insight on school based mediation alternatives that may assist the community truancy board.

We would be glad to work with the legislature, and any other appropriate agencies to make this effort successful.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

Our support of this bill represents a 75% consensus or more of our membership.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

HE'E Member List

Academy 21
After-School All-Stars Hawaii
Alliance for Place Based Learning
*Castle Complex Community Council
Center for Civic Education
Coalition for Children with Special Needs
*DOE Windward District
*Faith Action for Community Equity
Fresh Leadership LLC
Girl Scouts Hawaii
*Good Beginnings Alliance
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation
*Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars
*Hawai'i Charter School Network
*Hawai'i Education Matters
*Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition
*Hawaii State PTSA
Hawai'i State Student Council
Hawai'i State Teachers Association
Hawai'i P-20
Hawai'i 3Rs
Head Start Collaboration Office
It's All About Kids
*INPEACE
Joint Venture Education Forum
Kamehameha Schools
*Kanu Hawai'i
Kupu A'e
*Leaders for the Next Generation
McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds
*Our Public School
*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning
*Parents and Children Together
*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i
Punahou School PUEO Program

Teach for America
The Learning Coalition
US PACOM
University of Hawai'i College of Education
YMCA of Honolulu
Voting Members (*)

ohno2-Jun

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 11, 2013 10:46 AM
To: EDNtestimony
Cc: tabraham08@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB190 on Feb 13, 2013 14:00PM*

HB190

Submitted on: 2/11/2013

Testimony for EDN on Feb 13, 2013 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Troy Abraham | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov