

# **SB 592**

## Testimony

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
Governor



RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

SCOTT E. ENRIGHT  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL KOKUBUN  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION, AND  
HIGHER EDUCATION

Thursday, January 6, 2013  
Room 414  
1:30 P.M.

SENATE BILL NO. 564  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairpersons Nishihara, Tokuda, and Taniguchi and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill No. 592. The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to operate and implement the Future Farmers of America and 4-H programs. The Department of Agriculture supports the intent of this measure.

The Department believes in the importance of engaging our youth in agricultural endeavors. With the average age of our farmers at around 60 years old it is imperative that we expose our children to agricultural experiences at a young age in the hopes that they will decide to pursue agriculture as a career. Both the FFA and 4-H programs provide those key experiences that can bring more youth to our agricultural work force. However, resources are needed to fully carry out these programs and the Department would defer to the University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources to determine those resources.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide our testimony on this measure.



Hawaii County 4-H Livestock Association  
P.O. Box 1585  
Honokaa, HI 96727

February 4, 2013

Senate Committees on Agriculture, Education, and Higher Education

Aloha Honorable Chairs Nishihara, Tokuda, and Taniguchi, and Committee Members:  
**Support SB592**

The lack of young people in agriculture is a critical issue not just locally, but nationally and even globally. It is becoming more and more apparent that we must strongly support agricultural education for our young people if we are to increase Hawai'i's resilience and sustainability. The 4-H program has a proven track record of not only exposing and educating young people to positive, hands on experience in agriculture, but is also a program that instills leadership and life skills in a wide variety of other projects, such as sewing, photography, and robotics.

As the parents of present and past 4-H youth and volunteer club leaders we have experienced the value of the 4-H Livestock program and are committed to helping the 4-H livestock program continue and flourish into the future.

The FFA program similarly is a program with a proven track record that needs to be strongly supported if we are going to educate and encourage young people in the skills of sustainability and resilience.

Please support SB592 as a first step towards rebuilding the vitality of the 4-H and FFA programs.

Sincerely,

Ron McKeehan, President and Chair  
Guy Galimba, Co-Chair  
Jeri Moniz, Vice President  
Michelle Galimba, Secretary

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**SB592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2013

Testimony for AGL/EDU/HRE on Feb 6, 2013 13:30PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Nancy Redfeather	The Kohala Center - HISGN	Support	No

Comments: Support for agricultural education in Hawai'i will help to create the farming foundation we need to build as our farmers age. I would suggest that FFA support be evenly distributed among those High Schools who have active FFA Chapters. Currently the weighted student formula is used for the distribution of FFA funding and the programs who need assistance are not receiving enough. Supporting our youth to reconnect with the land and their food will yield positive results for health, stewardship, and some students will choose to become future farmers.

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**SB592**

Submitted on: 2/4/2013

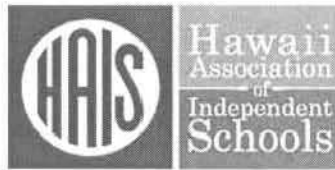
Testimony for AGL/EDU/HRE on Feb 6, 2013 13:30PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Keith Ideoka	Lahainaluna FFA Chapter	Support	No

Comments: The Agriculture teachers in our state have had to endure several years of not having the support of a state FFA advisor or director at the DOE's OCISS branch. The person the DOE tasked to provide services, support, and resources to the FFA Advisors to the individual high schools was trying his best to accomodate us, but he had too many other areas that he was responsible for. Over these years, Agriculture teachers stopped promoting FFA at their schools, the total # of (Hawaii) FFA Chapters dropped, and overall participation of students at our annual FFA State Conference declined. Having the UHCTAHR manage and oversee our local FFA and 4H organizations is a great way to revitalize our state's Agriculture Education programs and to promote Agriculture careers to our students. I fully support this bill.

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February 6, 2013  
1:30 p.m.  
Conference Room 414

TESTIMONY TO  
THE JOINT SENATE COMMITTEES ON  
AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION, AND HIGHER EDUCATION

**RE: SB 592 – Relating to Agriculture**

Chairs Nishihara, Tokuda, Taniguchi, Vice Chairs Kouchi, Kidani, Kahele, and the 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 students statewide.

**HAIS supports SB 592** which appropriates funds to operate and implement the Future Farmers of America and 4-H programs, helping to build the next generation of our islands' agricultural leaders and supporting careers in agriculture. We ask that the legislature consider similar support for the school gardens programs that encourage and supplement our youngest students with experienced-based learning and complement the 4H and FFA agricultural education.

4H and FFA are programs with decorated histories of educating and training our communities' farmers and ranchers to be sustainable. They are organizations that address sustainability by providing hands-on help in providing our youth with the tools for success. Local agriculture can be revitalized by supporting these organizations, which provide the experience and skills needed by farmers and ranchers to endure the rigorous, yet rewarding work they face. The lack of young farmers and ranchers with the experience, skills, and ambition needed to undertake the complex work of farming and ranching as a business is large. By rebuilding existing programs that educate, support, and encourage youth for agriculture careers, specifically Future Farmers of America, with 4-H programs, there is an opportunity to address this problem while achieving community resilience in a timely and efficient manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Simon Russell  
Hui 'O Mālama 'Āina  
910-A E. Kuiaha Rd  
Haiku, HI 96078

Aloha Honorable Senators,

I am writing to support SB. 592. Nothing is more important to the future of farming in Hawaii than growing a new generation of farmers. Currently the average age of a farmer in Hawaii is 60. Let's reduce that number a lot, and make sure Agriculture in Hawaii never retires.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Simon Russell  
Owner and Farmer  
Hui 'O Mālama 'Āina

**SB592**  
**AGL/EDU/HRE**  
**2/06/2013 – 1:30 Conference Room 414**

Dear Honorable Senators:

**Please give your full support for SB592.**

Agriculture in Hawaii and across the U.S. is facing a crisis situation. Since 1970, we've lost nearly a quarter of our family farms. That rate will likely accelerate in the coming years given the average age of farmers today is now 60 years old.

Small family farms supply approximately 80% of the food we eat. The continuing demise of family farms will have grave consequences if we cannot foster and provide incentive a new generation of food producers. The gravity of the situation is being compounded by many factors, but the world population growth is a primary concern. The United Nation predicts that our world population will grow to 9 billion people by 2050, requiring 70% more food production to feed everyone. How can we feed people when there is no generational succession on existing farms and no incentive for new agriculture entrepreneurs?

The Future Farmers of America and 4-H Clubs are working to develop the next generation of farmers. In these challenging economic times, these organizations need the support of the state to help grow new farmers and ranchers. I personally know farmers today who have benefited from these programs. Young people learn the life skills needed to farm but more importantly, they gain an appreciation and love for the work.

I trust that you will support SB592 and give our young people and agriculture a chance to succeed.

Respectfully,

Daniel S. Nakasone



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**SB592**

Submitted on: 2/1/2013

Testimony for AGL/EDU/HRE on Feb 6, 2013 13:30PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Oppose	Yes

Comments:

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Chairs: Nishihara, Tokuda, and Taniguchi and the members of the Committees on Agriculture, Education and Higher Education.

My name is Ernie Gill and I applaud your efforts to address the shrinking supply of trained agriculturists needed to meet the demands of agriculture and natural resources in Hawaii.

I work for the National FFA Organization as the Western Regional Director. My responsibilities require me to work with the 10 western states to facilitate the delivery of agriculture education and FFA by working with state staff, teacher leaders and Universities in those states. Currently the National FFA Organization is at record highs for number of agriculture education programs and student membership in the National FFA. In Hawaii the number of programs and FFA membership are at all-time lows. Although there may be many more enrolled but a small percentage are in FFA where they learn crucial leadership skills necessary to for employment in today's agriculture. Every state in the nation has a State Director of Agriculture Education and in Hawaii this position has been absent for numerous years. Without this person information is not provided and followed up on with the advisors. Thus students are deprived of numerous opportunities provided by National FFA that create leadership, personal growth and career awareness for all students. Hawaii has a rich heritage in the FFA dating back to 1929 when Hawaii territory was recognized with a National Charter and in 1931 when a student from Hawaii received the first American Degree. Over the years there have been many finalists in Public speaking at the National level and students have participated in numerous leadership development events at the national level. Currently Hawaii students only participate sporadically in the many National FFA leadership development programs. There are numerous programs and most are offered at a minimal fee or cost sharing. This bill, SB 592, would be a starting point for support that is necessary to reverse this trend allowing the resources necessary for participation. However, I am concerned about the funding and the way it is appropriated. The \$75,000 to be appropriated to the Department of Education where one half is to be for FFA support and the other half is to be for 4-H support is concerning. I think it is appropriate for FFA as traditional funding comes from USDE, to DOE and then to the schools for use in school based programs. However, the funding for 4-H should not be appropriated to DOE as it is not school based. The appropriate channel for funding of 4-H is USDE to Land Grant Universities then through extension agents to local support. I am afraid this would cause confusion and conflict of use with two different entities funding 4-H. I would recommend that \$75,000 be appropriate to DOE for

use solely for FFA support and that \$75,000 be appropriated to the University for Agriculture Education and Extension Education training teachers and agents. There is a severe shortage now and in the future for these professionals. We cannot train the agriculture youth of the future without well qualified agriculture teachers and extension agents. Thank you for allowing my testimony.

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**SB592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2013

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kurt Kawamoto	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**SB592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2013

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

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**SB592**

Submitted on: 2/4/2013

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Naomi Egami	Individual	Oppose	No

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