

**SB2763**

**SD1**

**LATE**

**TESTIMONY**



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The Twenty-Seventh Legislature, State of Hawaii  
The Senate  
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 20, 2014

S.B. 2763 S.D. 1 – RELATING TO  
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports S.B. 2763 S.D. 1, which requires that the Board of Education hold not less than six community meetings annually. This measure also continues to require that the Board hold at least one community meeting per year in each county.

Effective communication between stakeholders and the Board of Education is an essential component to achieving three (3) goals that the Board of Education and the Department of Education have identified as Student Success, Staff Success and Successful Systems of Support. It is only through open, meaningful and frequent dialogue that ideas can be exchanged, action generated and understanding achieved.

This measure will increase the opportunities that all stakeholders have to effectively communicate with the Board in our collective effort towards the desired outcome of college and career readiness for all of Hawaii's children.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of the intent of S.B. 2763 S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Randy Perreira *for*  
Executive Director



COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S COUNCIL OF HAWAII  
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February 20, 2014

Senator Clayton Hee, Chair  
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice-Chair  
Chairs of the Judiciary and Labor Committee – State Capitol

RE: SB2763, SD 1 – Relating to the Board of Education (BOE)

Dear Chair Hee and Vice-Chair Shimabukuro and Members of the Committee,

The 17 Community Children's Councils (CCCs) **supports** SB2763, SD 1. This bill will require the BOE to include an open forum on its meeting agenda to allow all interested parties an opportunity to present oral testimony on any matter not on the agenda; provided that the testimony is related to matters over which the board has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power. The CCCs believe this will help to continue the positive relation between parents, community stakeholders and the BOE.

The 17 Community Children's Councils (CCCs) are community-based bodies comprised of parents, professionals in both public and private agencies and other interested persons who are concerned with specialized services provided to Hawaii's students. Membership is diverse, voluntary and advisory in nature. The CCCs are in rural and urban communities organized around the Complexes in the Department of Education.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify if there are any questions or you need further information please contact us at 586-5370

Sincerely yours

Tom Smith, Co-Chair

Jessica Wong-Sumida, Co-Chair

(Original signatures are on file with the CCCO)

Erik Ott  
2825 S. King St., #2901  
Honolulu, HI 96826  
February 19, 2014

To: Senate JDL Committee  
[JDLtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:JDLtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)

Re: SB2763 – Support SB2763 with an Amendment Making BOE Public Forum a Statutory Requirement

Aloha Senate JDL Committee Members,

This is my testimony on SB2763 which I support if amended to require a public forum at regular Board of Education Committee meetings. I am a concerned community member who has been to two different Board Of Education community meetings in the past year. We need law that would require the BOE hear public comments at their regular meetings. This change in law is needed because BOE “community meetings” do not function as an effective forum for community members to voice their concerns. Let me describe for you what I’ve witnessed at community meetings so you will understand why they are ineffective venues for community concerns.

The first meeting I attended last year was in Honolulu. At first glance, the meeting seemed relatively well attended. The parking lot was full and most of the auditorium seats were taken. There were a few Board of Education members present.

The meeting began with an introduction of the Board Chairman. He welcomed the crowd then turned the microphone over to a Depart of Education employee. Next was a series of performances (song and dance) from the children at the school. I understood why there were so many people at the meeting. Many of the people there were friends and family of the students who were performing.

Most of the remainder of the meeting was spent highlighting educational programs and personnel the DOE considers outstanding individual contributors from various schools throughout Hawaii. The emphasis of this time was on touting how wonderful the education system is working and how progressive the technology is becoming. I should add that a video was played from a computer with the accompanying sound completely inadequate. It was not a good demonstration of how the DOE is becoming technologically progressive when they cannot even play the sound of a video playing on a computer.

Toward the end the meeting the BOE Chairman took the microphone to entertain questions from the audience. By this time there were less than a dozen non-DOE employees left in attendance. The chairman stated that only one question would be permitted per person and the question and response time would be limited. He prompted for questions. Some answers he deferred to others in the room. Others he never really responding to the issue presented.

So few people meant very few questions and comments arose. As the Chairman was waiting for further questions, a member from the community who had already asked a question, asked if they could pose a

2<sup>nd</sup> question as there was plenty of time before the scheduled meetings end. The chairman denied this request and called an end to the meeting even though there was time to allow it.

This meeting was not an opportunity to discuss issues with the BOE. Not all board members were even present. There was no time allotted for any real discussion on the issues facing education.

The second meeting I attended was in Hilo, on the Big Island on 11/21/13. This time the parking lot was relatively empty. We had a difficult time finding the meeting as there were no people mingling in the hallways of the campus. We finally found the auditorium. There were 3 Board members attending, about 20 DOE employees, and my wife and when the audience was asked who were members of the community, my wife and I were the only non-DOE employees there. I don't think the people of Hawai'i believe it makes a difference to attend these meetings so, they don't bother to come. After my two BOE community meetings, I certainly feel this way.

Fortunately this meeting did not have children performing. Otherwise the structure was similar to the meeting in Oahu. The majority of the meeting was taken up with presentations on some of the programs being done at schools, recognition of employees, and we saw the same video as in Oahu.

Toward end the meeting in Hilo, BOE member Brian De Lima took the microphone to entertain questions from the audience. It seemed he was much more open and interested to hear what people had to say than the Board Chairman Horner at been at the end of the meeting on Oahu. We two community members did have the opportunity to pose a few questions however there was no real discussion on the issues presented. I testified, but to my knowledge, the issue I raised still has not been addressed.

As on Oahu, this meeting was not an opportunity for the community to discuss issues with the BOE/DOE. To me, discussion means an exploration of the issues and potential solutions. Less board members were present than were at the Oahu meeting. There was time allotted for questions to be asked, however the responses did not prompt discussion on the issue, rather were more of just acknowledgement that the question was posed and is an issue.

SB2763 was introduced in order to require that the Board of Education engage the community in on-going, regular community forums to help identify problems so that they may eventually be resolved. The BOE dog and pony shows called "community meetings" are a shallow pretense of community engagement, but they are completely ineffective as a means of substantial community input and public accountability.

Thank you for your consideration,

Erik Ott

**From:** [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
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**Cc:** [mcmakaha@yahoo.com](mailto:mcmakaha@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SB2763 on Feb 20, 2014 10:30AM  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 19, 2014 3:39:12 PM

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**SB2763**

Submitted on: 2/19/2014

Testimony for JDL on Feb 20, 2014 10:30AM in Conference Room 016

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Michelle Uilani Chung	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support the testimony of the Community Children's Council.

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.

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Senate Judiciary Committee  
SB 2763

2-20-14  
10:30 Am  
016

Senator Hee and Members of the Committee:

I am Marcia Linville, speaking in support of Senate Bill 2763.

I have served as a librarian for over 30 years in federal, state, city and special libraries, as HGEA Agency Council Head, Unit 13, DOE, for almost 20 years, as President of the Librarians Association of Hawaii for two terms and as Childrens Section Head for the Hawaii Librarians Association. I have also served as legislative liaison for the Democratic Party, for HLA and for LAH.

The opportunity for the public to bring to the attention of the Board of Education matters of public concern, has been for over 30 years, one of the most effective ways to inform the Board of Education of problems within the schools or the system of which they may have been unaware. This period for public input was eliminated when the appointed Board decided to limit public testimony to only those matters appearing on the agenda. When one petitioner asked how she could get something on the agenda, she was told "You can't".

It is my belief that the Board, based on its experience, has taken a business model as it working paradigm, seeing the Superintendent as the CEO, the CAS as middle management, the teachers as retailers, and the students as consumers. But this model has failed to recognize the fact that Hawaii's people as a whole are the customers who are affected by public education. The Board is, in effect, cutting off consumer input, usually believed to be a necessary part of any successful business. The Board has recently acerbated this obstacle to public input by proposing to limit the general business meeting to only one a month. Granted that this is a volunteer, unpaid board, which has been successful in eliminating many unnecessary expenses, it does not seem a reasonable perception that eliminating opportunities for public input on areas of concern is eliminating an unnecessary expense.

I there respectfully request your support for this bill.

*Marcia S Linville*  
Marcia Linville  
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