

LATE

**From:** [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
**To:** [EDU Testimony](#)  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1352 on Mar 25, 2015 13:30PM\*  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 25, 2015 11:39:55 AM

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**HB1352**

Submitted on: 3/25/2015

Testimony for EDU on Mar 25, 2015 13:30PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Denise Taylor-Carey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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LATE

March 25, 2015

TO: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair

TESTIMONY RE: HB 1352 HD1

I am testifying from the parental perspective in favor of this bill.

My daughter Aubrey, now 16 years old, was born with Down syndrome and since birth, has been hearing impaired. She was also diagnosed with Autism at age 9. Despite these multiple diagnoses, Aubrey has always had been a vivacious child and highly motivated to learn--and until the end of middle-school, far-surpassed what might ever have been expected of her in the classroom.

Our family lives in the Central District, thus Aubrey attended Waimalu Elementary School because of her need for a Total Communication Program which enabled her to speak, supported with SEE (Signed Exact English) or SSS (Sign Supported Speech) and learn in English Language Order. For the most part, Aubrey thrived at Waimalu Elementary in a highly inclusive setting, while dedicated administrators and staff on the district and school levels continued to seek out communication and educational supports, and the additional resources to meet her complex needs.

No researched-based, multi-sensory curriculum has ever been used to educate Aubrey.

The DOE has never provided the appropriate amount of intensive speech therapy needed for Aubrey to be able to speak discernably and communicate effectively--without the need to support her speech with sign language. Because of her resulting communication needs and the fact that no Total Communication Programming is offered in any school in the Central District, Aubrey was then transferred to the Leeward District to attend Highlands Intermediate School. (It should be noted that the Hawaii School for Deaf and Blind has never been a placement option for Aubrey as she has never learned ASL or its complex language order.)

Aubrey's middle school teacher repeatedly cited Aubrey's need for a "SPED Hearing Impaired Teacher who is able to model clear speech, supported by sign, in English Language Order and who is able to modify and adapt on the fly." Aubrey's IEP team has repeatedly intentionally refused to add this vital language to Aubrey's IEP to support Aubrey's obvious continuing need for a SPED HI teacher in a Total Communication Program.

During Aubrey's transition meetings for high school placement, Aubrey was denied entry into to the only high school Total Communication program near our home--at Pearl City High School. Over the course of her entire Freshman year, Aubrey was serviced by multiple substitutes and teachers (10+) who could not communicate with her. Though multiple administrators have told our family that they were seeking out a Total Communication teacher, after almost THREE school years they have yet to provide this teacher.

In January of 2012, we were informed that a SPED HI teacher had been hired, but then was told by administration the day after this teacher started (because he was not able to speak clearly thus unable to model speech for her and he himself needed an Interpreter) that he was not an appropriate teacher for her. (Interview process was conducted by relay call rather than Skype with Hearing Impaired Resource Teacher's supervision.) Yet, as administration constantly stated, because of "contractual obligations" this teacher was kept on my daughter's case and because of this--the position could not be filled with an appropriate SPED HI teacher candidate. *Just one week ago, I was told by the Principal of Pearl City High School, that he would no longer be seeking out a Total Communication Teacher to service my child.*

Aubrey receives special education funded by the Hawaii Department of Education and our Federal government but cannot derive educational benefit because her school IEP team refuses to acknowledge Aubrey's need for this Total Communication , SPED HI Teacher--or even in the interim, an Interpreter. Her current district Hearing Impaired Resource Teacher does not advocate for her obvious need. Aubrey goes to school every day with paid staff that cannot understand her expressive communication. Without communication, a child cannot function—let alone, learn.

In addition, despite extensive professional recommendations for her urgent need for BCBA level autism support—this need is not met either--thus her symptoms of Autism grow each and every day which further impacts her ability to learn and relate to her world.

Her Pediatrician and I, also have serious concerns regarding her safety and medical well-being on her current campus.

I, as a single Mother, cannot home school my child. I have spent extensive hours advocating for Aubrey, trying to secure a free and appropriate public education for my child--which has severely impacted my ability to provide for our family. As a teacher, I have always been willing to supplement at home. We need to work together so that my child(ren) and I are able to be productive citizens who will not have to rely on public funding to subsist.

I cannot comprehend why our Hawaii DOE system works so hard to educate a child in elementary school, and then abandons that same child when they move into high school. We need to understand that if we do not efficiently educate children like Aubrey, that they will become even greater financial burdens to our state in their adulthood.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Denise A. J. Huff". The signature is written in black ink and includes a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

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**HB1352**

Submitted on: 3/25/2015

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Myles Kawakami	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As an independent small businessman, I support an audit of the DOE. The DOE is such a huge enterprize and everyone needs to know where the monies are going. I would like to know how much of our taxpayers money is going directly to the classrooms and students, and I believe an audit is the start of this process. thank you.

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