



## KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Date: March 29, 2016

Where: State Capitol Room 211

### TESTIMONY

By Ka'ano'i Walk  
Kamehameha Schools

TO: Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee

RE: **HB 2205 HD1, SD1 Relating to Charter Schools**

E ka Luna Ho'omaluku Tokuda, ka Hope Luna Ho'omaluku Dela Cruz a me nā Lālā o kēia Kōmike o ka 'Aha Kenekoa, aloha! My name is Ka'ano'i Walk and I serve as the Senior Policy Analyst of the Kūamahi Community Education Group of Kamehameha Schools. House Bill 2205 HD1, SD1 relating to charter schools establishes requirements for public charter school board meetings, among other changes to the public charter school law.

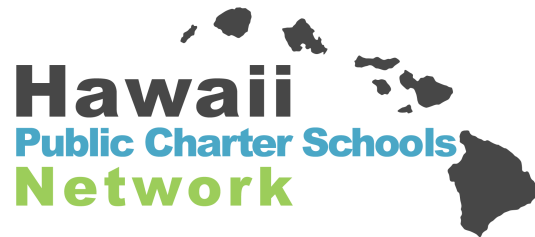
We are writing to respectfully **oppose** this bill.

Act 130, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2011, established a Charter School Governance, Accountability, and Authority Task Force to provide clarity to the relationships, responsibilities, and lines of accountability and authority among stakeholders of Hawai'i's charter school system. The following year, in Act 130, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2012, the State legislature established a new Hawai'i Revised Statutes chapter, 302D, governing charter schools based on the recommendations of the Task Force. The new Chapter vested significant oversight authority and responsibility in a new Charter School Commission.

Kamehameha Schools advocates for and supports the achievement of Hawai'i's Native Hawaiian public school students. We have opposed this bill based on the potential for unintended consequences counter to the principles of accountability and transparency. This current version removes many of our earlier objections. However, we do not believe that there is adequate justification for its passage.

Kamehameha Schools has been a collaborator with the Hawai'i public charter schools for over a decade. Through our work with Hawaiian-focused public charter schools, we hope to significantly impact more children and their families through education. We believe that Hawaiian-focused charter schools provide quality educational choices for all families and ultimately enhance both academic achievement and engagement for students.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is a statewide educational system supported by a trust endowed by Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, whose mission is to improve the capability and well-being of Native Hawaiian learners. We believe that by continuing to engage in dialog around these charter school policies and proposals, we can contribute in a positive and meaningful way. Mahalo nui for your consideration.



March 29, 2016

To: Honorable Jill Tokuda, Chair  
Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair  
Senate Ways and Means Committee

From: Jeannine Souki, Executive Director  
Hawaii Public Charter Schools Network

Re: **HB 2205 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS – Comments**  
**Conference Room 211 – Hawaii State Capitol – Mar. 29, 2016, 9 A.M.**

On behalf of the Hawaii Public Charter School Network (HPCSN), we appreciate the opportunity to testify on HB 2205, HD1, Relating to Charter Schools. HPCSN appreciates the progress that has been made on this housekeeping bill, particularly with the deletion of Section 7 which would have exempted the Commission from the state Sunshine Act, and offers the following comments.

Act 130, Session Laws of Hawaii 2011, established a task force to address issues on charter school governance, accountability, and authority. In 2012, the legislature repealed previous charter school laws and adopted recommendations made by the Charter School Governance, Accountability, and Authority Task Force which provided a new Charter School Commission significant oversight authority and responsibility to ensure compliance of charter schools with applicable state and federal laws and also gave Charter School Governing Boards significant powers and duties to oversee the management and operations of charter schools. This effort was intended to establish clear roles and responsibilities for the charter schools sector and to balance accountability with providing innovative learning opportunities and creative educational approaches to improve the education of students.

In Section 1, the Commission is seeking to prohibit providing technical support to prospective charter applicants or applicant governing boards, except if required by federal law. The Commission has provided information and an RFP orientation for prospective applicants in the past. It would be unfortunate if this prohibition would extend to this practice as there no other avenue to get such information for new charter school applicants. HPCSN suggests this provision be clarified in the committee's report on this bill.

In Section 2, the Commission is adding reporting requirements for charter school governor boards notifications of agendas, minutes and membership. After consulting further with

the Commission staff and several schools, we are in general agreement with the changes made to this section of the bill.

In Section 3, the Commission is seeking to provide protections to applicant governing boards. It's not clear why this provision is required for applicant governing boards to operate. HPCSN suggests the Committee clarify the intent of this provision in its committee report on this bill.

In Section 4, the Commission is seeking an amendment to HRS Section 302D-18, to be exempted from the contested case proceedings under HRS Chapter 91. HPCSN has expressed concerns regarding this section, however, acknowledges the necessity of being clear about the Commission's role as an authorizing agency for charter schools and is satisfied with the refinements made in this section.

In Section 5, the Commission is seeking clarification of school fees. Charter schools already have the ability to assess and collect special fees and charges from students for co-curricular activities. HPCSN believes the current statute is sufficient and no change is required.

In Section 6, the Commission is requesting an exemption for conversion charter schools from the Department of Education's geographic exemptions requirements to establish enrollment preferences. HPCSN is not aware of any schools seeking this amendment.

HPCSN works to support public charter schools in Hawaii and to be a voice for children and families that seek choice in an independent public school setting. Thank you for consideration of our request for further clarifications to this bill. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of HPCSN.