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FOR: HB 2453 HD1 Relating to Charter Schools
DATE: Tuesday, March 29, 2016
TIME: 9:00 AM
COMMITTEE(S): Senate Committee on Ways and Means
ROOM: Conference Room 211
FROM: Yvonne Lau, Interim Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Testimony in support of HB 2453 HD1

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 2453 House Draft 1, which would appropriate unspecified funds to make start-up grants available to pre-opening charter schools that would be priority system needs identified by the Commission.

In its current Request for Proposals for new charter schools, the Commission has particularly welcomed applications to create schools that would provide additional enrollment capacity in geographic areas where existing department of education schools are already exceeding, have already reached, or are projected to reach or exceed, full enrollment capacity; or that would serve communities where existing public schools are not performing well under state academic measures. While welcoming such proposals, the Commission has not lowered its rigorous approval bar for these applications.

The targeted availability of grants for start-up schools would add a significant incentive for these especially desirable applications and could provide important support to some newly created, pre-opening schools in their start-up year before they become fully operational and are able to draw per-pupil and other state funding. For a time before the Commission’s creation start-up grants were made available to newly approved pre-opening schools. Hawaii is not

currently in a position to avail itself of federal grants that have been created for this important purpose, although that is something the Commission hopes to pursue in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.