

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHERINE PAYNE
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
1111 Bishop Street, Suite 516, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

FOR: HB 2453 Relating to Charter Schools
DATE: Monday, February 08, 2016
TIME: 2:00 PM
COMMITTEE(S): House Committee on Education
ROOM: Conference Room 309
FROM: Tom Hutton, Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Testimony in support HB 2453

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Ohno, and members of the Committee:

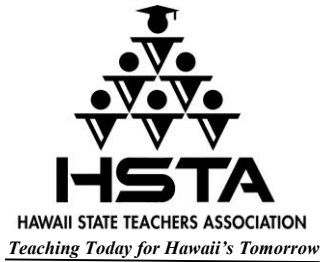
The State Public Charter School Commission appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 2797, which would appropriate \$200,000 to make start-up grants available to pre-opening charter schools that would be priority system needs identified by the Commission. We are grateful to Chair Takumi and Representative Lopresti for their introduction of the proposal and his interest in public charter schools as a potential part of the solution to school overcrowding.

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 intends to pursue.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

Corey Rosenlee
President
Justin Hughey
Vice President
Amy Perruso
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION

RE: HB 2453 - RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2016

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Takumi and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **opposes HB 2453**, relating to charter schools.

Hawaii's public schools are besieged by overcrowding and declining infrastructure. Our state's school facilities are, on average, over 65-years-old. Yet, at Campbell High School, enrollment stands at 3,049 students, up 15 percent from 2010 and roughly 1,000 more students than in 2005. Campbell was built to serve 1,700 students, meaning that it is operating at 80 percent overcapacity.

Campbell is not the only school facing overcrowding. Numerous schools throughout the state crowd keiki into crumbling buildings, creating classroom experiences that inhibit learning and impede safety. Nonetheless, providing \$200,000 in seed money for charter schools is not and should not be the solution to overcrowded classrooms.

While we appreciate this bill's attempt to ease school congestion, we note that it would divert resources from traditional public schools. Charter schools and traditional departmental schools do not follow the same educational paradigm. Charter schools are public schools of choice, in which enrollment is opted into by the families of students. Moreover, despite accountability requirements, charter schools are freed from many of the regulations governing traditional public schools.

Late last year, the State Auditor criticized the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission for inadequate monitoring of charter school finances and compliance with state regulations, saying "the commission staff's inconsistent enforcement of

some but not all compliance requirements does not fulfill the commission's statutory responsibilities." To cite just a few of the problems noted by the State Auditor, Ka Waihona Public Charter School obtained a \$300,000 line of bank credit "without proper authority" and "for purposes not allowable by law," Hawaii Technology Academy is encumbered by \$1.1 million of debt stemming from a contract it signed with the profitmaking online education company K12 Classroom LLC, and declining enrollment at several charter schools has impacted long-term financial sustainability.

While these findings should not be interpreted as an indictment of all charter schools, they evince the type of problems that occur when public education is increasingly privatized. Charter schools are *de facto* government entities, but are privately managed. Therefore, using charter schools as a means to address overcrowding and infrastructure problems not only diverts funds from the repair, maintenance, and capital improvement of public schools, but also advances the process of privatizing public education. Teachers do not support the privatization of their profession, but believe it to be an affront on our nation's penultimate common good against which we must constantly defend.

Overcrowding must be solved by increasing funding for public schools. We urge to escalate public school funding by passing legislation to raise the general excise tax by one percent, with the revenue generated being dedicated to capital improvement projects, educational programming, and teacher recruitment and retention. Given this proposal's impact of public school resources and potential encouragement of public education privatization, however, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **oppose** this bill.

Marion K A Kapuniai
P. O. Box 6753
Kamuela, Hawaii 96743

February 7, 2016

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Hearing: Monday, February 8, 2016 2:00 p.m.
Conference Rm 309 State Capitol, Hawaii

TESTIMONY ON HB 2453

Appropriates moneys for start-up grants for newly approved, pre-opening, public charter school.

-

I, an interested and concerned citizen, and Governing Board Member of Kanu O Ka 'Aina
New Century Public Charter School testify to SUPPORT HB 2453 WITH AMENDMENTS.

SECTION 2: AMEND Page 3, Line 1 and Line 4

There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii, the sum of
\$200,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 216-2017 for start-up grants for
each new pre-opening public charter school(s) that will meet the priority needs identified by
the state public charter school commission in its request for proposals for new schools.

The state public charter school commission shall (establish) convene a committee of
administrative leaders from three public charter schools who will recommend criteria and
guidelines for use of grant funds.

We have identical kuleana – to SERVE and REPRESENT.

It is my kuleana (right, responsibility, and privilege) to participate!

Thank You, M Kapuniai,
Waimea, Moku O Keawe

Phone: (808) 936-0157
Email: duke@sandwichisles.net



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

House Committee on Education

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Date: February 8, 2016

Where: State Capitol Room 309

TESTIMONY

By Ka'ano'i Walk
Kamehameha Schools

To: Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Ohno and Members of the Committee

RE: **HB 2453 Relating to Charter Schools**

E ka Luna Ho'omalū Takumi, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalū Ohno a me nā Lālā o ke Kōmike Ho'ona'auao o ka Hale o nā Lunamaka'āinana, 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 2453 relating to charter schools appropriates \$200,000 for start-up grants for newly approved pre-opening public charter schools and requires the state public charter school commission to establish guidelines and criteria for the grants.

As part of the second goal of Kamehameha Schools' strategic plan, which guides us to contribute to the communities collective efforts to improve Hawai'i's education systems for Native Hawaiian learners, Kamehameha Schools is committed to support Hawaiian-focused charter schools and therefore we stand in **support** of HB 2453.

Kamehameha Schools advocates for and supports the achievement of Hawai'i's Native Hawaiian public school students. As such, we have 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 our families and ultimately enhance both academic achievement and engagement for students. This bill is a good first step toward funding approved, pre-opening public charter schools. We encourage you, the leaders of our government to stand with us in supporting a move to improve the educational system in Hawai'i in this way.

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.

We believe that this bill promotes the saying, e kūlia i ka nu'u. To constantly strive for the summit! We commend the legislature for working hard to increase the effectiveness of our public education system. Mahalo nui.



46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Executive Director

TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 2453, RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

House Committee on Education
Hon. Roy M. Takumi, Chair
Hon. Takashi Ohno, Vice Chair

Monday, February 8, 2016, 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

Honorable Chair Takumi and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 350 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in strong opposition to House Bill 2453, relating to charter schools.

We appreciate this bill's effort to ease overcrowding in Hawai'i's public schools, but strongly oppose the diversion of public funds and resources from public school classrooms to privately governed charter schools.

Last May, the state revoked the charter for Halau Lokahi Public Charter School. When the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission (HSPCSC) combed through the school's records, they noted approximately \$100,000 in questionable expenditures, which were reported to the Attorney General's Office for investigation. Lokahi's director and two of its employees were arrested. Moreover, the school's rent payments reached \$33,000 per month, an unsustainable amount for the struggling school. To cut costs, Lokahi contracted a for-profit charter school company from the mainland to provide online curricula. This and other other savings efforts were to no avail, however, as the school eventually closed and its charter was rescinded, leaving local taxpayers potentially on the hook for hundreds of thousands of dollars in contracted debt.

While the experience of Lokahi does not represent all charter schools, it speaks to the potential pitfalls involved in privatizing public education. Originally intended to be sites of educational innovation, charter schools have instead become "school choice" models producing, at best, mixed results. According to HSPCSC, charter schools differ from traditional public schools in three ways:

- **Choice:** Charter schools give families the opportunity to **choose** the school most suitable for their children's educational well being. Teachers **choose** to create and work at schools where they directly shape the best working and learning environment for their students and themselves.
- **Accountability:** Charter schools are judged on how well they meet the academic, financial, and organizational performance expectations set forth in their charter performance contracts. Additionally, because charter schools are **schools of choice**, another measure of accountability is student enrollment—if students and their families are unhappy, they can **choose** to go elsewhere.
- **Autonomy:** While charter schools must adhere to the same federal laws and regulations and state standards as all other public schools, they have **flexibility with curriculum and direct management of energy and resources**, allowing them to be innovative.

What is clear, even from HSPCSC's description, is that charter schools are designed to advance the "school choice" agenda by providing alternatives to traditional public schools, in which curriculum and resources are managed by private governing bodies (whose members, the State Auditor has noted, sometimes violate conflict-of-interest practices by comingling nonprofit and charter school affairs). In contrast, departmental schools are offered no such flexibility and are tasked with meeting the needs of every student who walks through their classroom doors.

Thus, providing \$200,000 to charter schools to rectify overcrowding sets the precedent that public school concerns can be addressed through the expansion of school choice initiatives, in which there is evidence of financial and ethical impropriety and from which public school resources may be diluted. In our view, passing this bill is akin to supporting a school voucher program, in which school choice is emphasized over support for universal, high quality public education. To address overcrowding in our state's public school classrooms, we urge the committee to increase funding for facilities by raising the general excise tax or raising income taxes on our state's highest earners.

Passing this bill could lay the groundwork for additional efforts to privatize public education. Accordingly, and on behalf of public school students and teachers, we **strongly oppose** this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Executive Director
IMUAlliance

HB2453

Submitted on: 2/6/2016

Testimony for EDN on Feb 8, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dylan Armstrong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

HB2453

Submitted on: 2/5/2016

Testimony for EDN on Feb 8, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Samuel Kaauwai	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

HB2453

Submitted on: 2/4/2016

Testimony for EDN on Feb 8, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ka'iulani Pahi'o	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov



From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 12:01 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Cc: hawaiiifishingfanatic@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2453 on Feb 8, 2016 14:00PM

HB2453

Submitted on: 2/8/2016

Testimony for EDN on Feb 8, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Don Aweau	Individual	Support	No

Comments: In full support of legislation and urge the Committee for passage of this bill. Providing monies for the growth of public charter schools is a great investment in the future of Hawai'i and should be supported accordingly. Mahalo.

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.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov