



February 26, 2016

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

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

Re: **SB 2797 – RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS – SUPPORT**
Conference Room 211 – Hawaii State Capitol – Feb. 26, 2016, 9:40 A.M.

On behalf of the Hawaii Public Charter School Network (HPCSN), we are submitting support testimony for SB 2797, Relating to Charter Schools, which would authorize start up funding for newly approved public charter schools that will meet priority needs identified by the Charter School Commission and establish grant criteria and use of public funds.

This initiative is a much-needed step to provide funding for start-up grants that assist new charter schools approved by the Charter School Commission. Previously, Hawaii public charter schools were eligible for state grants to assist with their significant start-up costs. Public charter schools approved after Act 130 (2012) have shared serious challenges they face with the start up of a new school.

Even after three years in operation, a start-up public charter school can continue to be challenged by the “chicken-or-egg” dilemma of having to draw facilities costs from very modest per pupil funding and fund raising resources especially as they seek to grow enrollment, which helps charter schools become more sustainable. The provision of state start-up grants previously have helped several public charter schools gain firmer footing in the early years as schools become established in their respective communities.

HPCSN recommends that eligibility for start up grants be broadened to include more rural areas in addition to areas with greater than 50 percent Title I eligibility for new charter schools.

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 testimony. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of HPCSN.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHERINE PAYNE
CHAIRPERSON

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

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FOR: SB 2797 Relating to Charter Schools
DATE: Friday, February 26, 2016
TIME: 9:40 AM
COMMITTEE(S): Senate Committee on Ways and Means
ROOM: Conference Room 211
FROM: Tom Hutton, Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Testimony in support of SB2797

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 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 Vice Chair Dela Cruz for his 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 hopes to pursue in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WAM Testimony](#)
Cc: kaiulani@kalo.org
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2797 on Feb 26, 2016 09:40AM*
Date: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 2:49:29 PM

SB2797

Submitted on: 2/24/2016

Testimony for WAM on Feb 26, 2016 09:40AM in Conference Room 211

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

Comments:

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