

**SB834**

My name is Ocean Eale. I'm a senior at Kahuku High School. I currently represent my school on the Hawaii State Student Council. I am testifying in support of SB834 with the exception of Section 1, Sub-Section D.

As one of 188,000 students in the Hawaii school system, I feel that the adult board members aren't completely and will never completely be in touch with who they are working for: the students. The student rep on the BOE, who has a better perception of how students think, act, and feel, can better represent the student body, and better serve the BOE, if he/she had a vote because he/she is still a student. They are literally walking in their shoes.

Yes it is true that students have no experience in regards to fulfilling their duty as a student rep on the BOE, but that hasn't stopped the BOE from allowing a student representative. So why should that stop the student rep from having a vote on the BOE? This logic is also backwards because many of the politicians that will be voting yea or nay on this bill are in the same boat as our student representative. For example, my Representative in the Hawaii State House of Representatives, Mr. Feki Pouha (Republican, District 47) has no experience in fulfilling his duty as a Representative, yet he is allowed to vote. Should he not be allowed to vote based on this logic?

Furthermore, the student rep will be qualified to vote because he/she is selected each year through a rigorous statewide selection process. This isn't a random selection. A student rep for the BOE has to meet certain qualifications and must be competent and dedicated to fulfilling their job as a board member.

While I am in support of SB834, there is one point that I am against. Section 1, Sub-Section D states as follows: *"the board shall invite the senior military commander in Hawaii to appoint a nonvoting military representative to the board."* I am against this because this is frivolous. To what purpose will it serve to have a military representative on the Board of Education? Furthermore, I see this section as a possible point of intrusion on our education system, which is controlled by our state government, by our military, which is controlled by the federal government.

Our state legislature has avoided giving our student rep on the BOE voting rights for way too long. Our voices as students deserve to be heard. After all, this education system is ours and is for our benefit. I hope you consider voting yea for SB834. Thank You for your time.