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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION

RE: SB 618 - RELATING TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2017

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports SB 618**, relating to the Board of Education.

In 2016, the Hawai'i State Board of Education conducted several community meetings in the evening, including on the outer islands, to offer the public an opportunity to participate in board decisions. The importance of these meetings was heightened by the revision of the Joint BOE-DOE Strategic Plan and writing of Gov. Ige's ESSA Blueprint, which were supported by additional community meetings organized by the Hawai'i State Department of Education and ESSA Task Force.

Now that the Strategic Plan has been adopted and the ESSA Blueprint is near completion, we hope that the board will continue opening its doors to the community, especially the concerns of our state's hardworking teachers. While a range of issues have been brought before the board as part of the Strategic Plan process, many questions linger about, for example, the possible application for the federal government's "innovative assessment" pilot program, details of the DOE's STRIVE-HI school accountability program, revisions to the educator effectiveness system, and improvement of services for special needs students. Since teachers are the most important school-level personnel in guiding student learning, they should have ample opportunity to provide their professional feedback to the board.

To lift teachers voices in educational governance, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



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

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## TESTIMONY FOR SENATE BILL 618, RELATING TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**House Committee on Education**  
**Hon. Justin H. Woodson, Chair**  
**Hon. Sharon E. Har, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, March 22, 2017, 2:00 PM**  
**State Capitol, Conference Room 309**

Honorable Chair Woodson and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMU Alliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 350 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in support of Senate Bill 618, relating to the Board of Education.

Over the past year, the Hawai'i State Board of Education has attempted to establish a more open and democratic decision-making process. The BOE has held several evening community meetings, including on the outer islands, to ensure that the public has an opportunity to provide input on board decisions. Such meetings were made more important by the revision of the Joint BOE-DOE Strategic Plan and drafting of Gov. Ige's ESSA Blueprint, additional community meetings for which were convened by the Hawai'i State Department of Education and ESSA Task Force, respectively.

At the same time, the board's and board committees' agendas remain wholly subject to the will of the chairs and most meetings are held at hours during which teachers and working families are preoccupied. While numerous topics have been brought to the BOE's attention through discussions around the revision of the strategic plan (which encompasses all public education activities and operations), the plan's extension was adopted last December. Urgent conversations on subjects ranging from the overuse of standardized testing to teacher evaluations to mandated curricula to the inadequacy of special education may be impossible to have, unless the public—especially hardworking educators and the parents of public school students—are given a pathway to place items on the board's radar.

For example, Infinite Campus, the DOE's new student information system, is currently in its first phase of implementation and is desperately in need of the BOE's attention, which it so far hasn't received. It replaces eSIS, the old student information system, which a few years ago, became incompatible with the outdated Java-based programs being run by the DOE. You can do

a lot of things with Infinite Campus—in fact, teachers are *required* to do a lot of things with Infinite Campus, like uploading grades and tracking attendance. Yet, it’s only as effective as it is understood by those who use it. To date, the DOE has provided 400 trainings on Infinite Campus. About 25 percent of those trainings were for “teacher cadres,” groups of about five teachers from a school meant to instruct fellow teachers in how to use the new program. The math sounds legit: 13,500 teachers divided by 500 teacher cadre members equals 27 teachers per cadre member. As with class size, however, this number varies greatly by school population—a teacher cadre member at Campbell High School, for example, would have to train far more people than a cadre member at Ka’a’awa Elementary.

Unfortunately, the DOE provided no time for teacher training. Of the four days teachers are given at the beginning of the year, at most schools, two are devoted almost exclusively to compliance and regulation reviews, while another two are meant for teachers to prep for the new year. Some savvy principals have allowed faculty meetings or portions of the contractual 21 hours of job-embedded professional development time to be used for Infinite Campus training, but even that isn’t enough to cover the shift to an entirely new student information system—grades, attendance, and all. Infinite Campus is also infinitely detailed. While customizability is good from the department’s standpoint, a teacher just wanting to input grades doesn’t enjoy having to sift through onerous presets for every possible grading situation over any given time period—weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly?—and then do it all over again.

Furthermore, in tandem with the state’s other shiny new software, Clever, Infinite Campus is glitchy. Teachers were required to get student passwords by August of last year, but this prevented students who switched classes, schools, or were new to the department after that date from getting passwords at all. Even programs like the department’s much ballyhooed online portion of Springboard have been prevented from operating appropriately, teachers have found, because of their inability to obtain passwords for all students and access the online content.

Finally, the new software doesn’t always sync seamlessly. My mother is the testing coordinator at Kahuku High School. Last September, she found that five full periods of classes were unable to take the iReady diagnostic test because the classes were missing from Infinite Campus and she could not add them. She notified Curriculum Associates, the company that operates iReady at her school, which, in turn, said that they no longer had departmental access to fix their own program, telling her that she had to call Clever. Clever had her check if the missing classes appeared on *their* platform, which they did. After more checking, it was determined that neither Curriculum Associates nor Clever could add the classes, since they’re synced with Infinite Campus, which is controlled by the DOE. Eventually, a conference call with the DOE, Infinite Campus, Clever, and Curriculum Associates was coordinated to determine what the glitch was, if there were other classes or schools with the problem, and figure out a fix, though no one could say when that would happen.

These programs are not making teachers' lives easier. If they're supposed to, then we need the BOE to ask the DOE to *get on that*.

To give teachers and the public an opportunity to educate the BOE on problems occurring at their community's schools, we ask you to require the board to provide a process for placing items on its agenda. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely,  
Kris Coffield  
*Executive Director*  
IMUAlliance

## EDNtestimony

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2017 7:42 PM  
**To:** EDNtestimony  
**Cc:** mendezj@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB618 on Mar 22, 2017 14:00PM\*

### **SB618**

Submitted on: 3/20/2017

Testimony for EDN on Mar 22, 2017 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	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.

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## EDNtestimony

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2017 10:24 PM  
**To:** EDNtestimony  
**Cc:** begoniabarry@gmail.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB618 on Mar 22, 2017 14:00PM\*

### **SB618**

Submitted on: 3/20/2017

Testimony for EDN on Mar 22, 2017 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Barbara Barry	Individual	Support	No

### Comments:

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Committee on Education

SB 618

3/22/17

2:00 p.m.

Chairman Takumi and members of the Committee:

I am Marcia Linville, speaking as SCC for the Education Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii, in support of SB 618. The education caucus covers a wide area of education including public schools, charter schools, private schools, libraries and early learning and is one of the special interest caucuses of the Democratic Party.

SB 618 is an important bill, because it returns to the public the opportunity to inform the Board of Education of areas of public concern, for which the Board has no other access.

The Boards present knowledge, through public testimony, is limited to only those items already on the agenda. When asked by an interested citizen how she could get an item of interest on the agenda she was told by the then chair of the Board. "You can't. We don't owe you anything." The woman was so shocked, she burst into tears.

The major source of information for the Board is reports from the staff. As was testified recently by a teacher at a Board meeting on the difficulties of recruitment and retention, "There is a large gap between the way things are reported to the Board and the way they are experienced by teachers."

From 1959 when the Board and the Department of Education were created in their present form, until it became an appointed Board under Governor Abercrombie, the agenda for every Board meeting had as its final item, Public Input. Anyone attending a Board meeting was able to bring to the Board's attention a matter of concern. There were limitations. No matter could be acted on until the next meeting, and personalities were not allowed. Testimony was limited to 5 minutes. It was explained to me by Marion Saunders in 1969, that that item had been deliberately added for the purpose of keeping the Board aware of public concerns. It made for a strong and informed educational community.

That sense of a strongly involved public school community has been lost with the curtailment of public testimony. Board meetings were previously held in the afternoons and evenings to enable working parents and teachers to attend. Under the new chair, evening meetings are available quarterly, but they are not well advertised. Under the ESSA, the Governor's Blueprint and the Board's Strategic Plan, there will be great many changes. It is vital that the public have the opportunity to inform the Board of the effect those changes are having at the school level. This can be most easily done by the restoration of the public input item on the agenda. I therefore ask for your support for SB 618.

Thank you  
Marcia Linville  
536-4466

## EDNtestimony

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2017 4:08 AM  
**To:** EDNtestimony  
**Cc:** michelematsuo@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SB618 on Mar 22, 2017 14:00PM

### **SB618**

Submitted on: 3/22/2017

Testimony for EDN on Mar 22, 2017 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
michele matsuo	Democratic Party of Hawaii Education Caucus	Support	No

Comments: Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kahele, and members of the Committee Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure. This is a priority item for the Education Caucus. We thank the author and sponsors of this measure for preparing and introducing it. Mahalo nui loa, Michele Matsuo

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.

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