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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON  
HOUSING and EDUCATION

RE: SB 2278 - RELATING TO TEACHER HOUSING

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2018

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Espero, Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports SB 2278**, relating to teacher housing.

Hawai'i continues to suffer from a shortage of qualified teachers. According to the DOE's STRIVE HI accountability reports, for the 2017-2018 school year, the state saw 1,011 SATEP vacancies, up from 920 SATEP vacancies in 2016-2017, including a slight increase in SPED SATEP vacancies, from 290 in 2016-2017 to 311 in 2017-2018. As we have noted to the Board of Education at previous hearings, SPED teacher attrition has led to a situation in which 1 out of every 6 SPED teachers have not completed a state-sanctioned teacher training program. Our teacher shortage problem is further clarified in the DOE's 2016-2017 Employment Report, which shows that teacher resignations increased from 781 in 2015-2016 to 850 in 2016-2017. Similarly in-state SATEP hires decreased from 404 to 387 over that time span, while out-of-state SATEP hires increased from 508 to 572. Teacher attrition is worse in high-poverty areas. In the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex Area, for example, an astounding 18 out of 19 SPED teachers hired for the 2017-2018 school year do not have a special education license.

Financial incentives are a key strategy for the recruitment and retention of teachers, particularly given that Hawai'i's teacher salaries continue to trail the nation when adjusted for cost of living. To recruit and retain effective educators, policymakers must find ways to lessen the financial burden of being a public school teacher. Establishing a housing voucher program is a good first step. In the islands, where new housing rarely becomes available, the percentage of renters who face

cost burdens—financial handicaps incurred by people spending over 30 percent of their income on housing—is roughly 57 percent, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Many of those cash-strapped renters are state educators, who are chronically underpaid. To make ends meet, many teachers are forced to pick up second and third jobs, live in cramped studio apartments, and cut back on necessities like medical care. Thus, a housing voucher program would assist teachers in attaining sustainable and stable residency, while staving off crushing debt burdens. It would also make the teaching profession more attractive by increasing educators' purchasing power through the subsidization of rent and mortgages in the state with the nation's highest housing costs.

To take care of the needs of Hawai'i's hardworking teachers, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

**LATE**

**SB-2278**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 6:28:43 AM

Testimony for HOU on 2/8/2018 2:45:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Laureen Sturm	Professional	Support	No

Comments:

To: Senator Will Espero, Chair

Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair

Committee on Housing

From: Laureen Sturm, Grade 3 Teacher

Kamaile Academy Public Charter School

**I am writing to SUPPORT SB2278 and SB 2885-Relating to Teacher Housing**

I am in agreement with Kamaile Academy Public Charter School in support of SB 2278 and SB 2885. With Kamaile Academy, it is a hard to fill school but with the support of SB 2278 it will establish the teacher home assistance program to be administered by the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation to provide housing vouchers to teachers like me who are employed by the department of education, including teachers at public charters where I work. Hawaii is a very expensive state to live in and SB 2278 will give me the opportunity to be able to stay here and teach at Kamaile Academy where good teachers are needed.

SB 2885 will authorize the Hawaii housing finance and development corporation to develop and implement a housing voucher program for full time teachers employed by the department of education or at a public charter school. I am agreement with this as I could use one of these vouchers myself in order to pay for my home.

I work at a school where I have no idea if my students had any meals once they left my room, sleeping conditions, bathing conditions, etc. I work at one of the poorest schools on the west side of Oahu. Still I would not trade my students for any others. I love and care for my students and hope I can continue to teach these amazing wonderful students at Kamaile Academy Charter School.

I strongly support SB 2278 and SB 2885 as they will help me and my fellow teachers to stay at Kamaile Academy where it is a hard to fill school location teaching for our poorest communities.

Sincerely,

Laureen Sturm

grade 3 Teacher