



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/13/2020
Time: 02:55 PM
Location: 229
Committee: Senate Education
Senate Higher Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 2088, HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes a working group to create a state plan to make FAFSA completion a statewide graduation requirement and an opt-out waiver for FAFSA completion by the 2022-2023 school year. Appropriates funds. Takes effect on 7/1/2050. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) respectfully offers comments on HB 2088, HD1.

The purpose of HB 2088, HD1 is to establish a working group to create a state plan to make FAFSA completion or an opt-out waiver for FAFSA completion a statewide graduation requirement. The Department recognizes the important role of public education in providing support for students and their families in completing applications for post-secondary education but has concerns about hinging a student's graduation on FAFSA completion or an opt-out waiver for FAFSA completion.

The Department has an established working group, including representatives from the Department's Data Governance and Analysis, Communications, and Student Services Branches and the Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education. However, the goal of this working group is to provide a statewide approach to increase awareness of FAFSA in order to increase completion rates and not to add FAFSA completion as a graduation requirement. The working group has been following the progress of states that have made FAFSA completion a graduation requirement and finds that more evidence is needed before a definitive conclusion can be drawn that a mandatory FAFSA policy will have the intended positive impact on college enrollment.

The Department has also established the College & Career Counselor Professional Learning Community (PLC) comprised of 96 members from 42 Department schools and 3 public charter schools across the state. The purpose of the PLC is to share resources, tools, and data to best

support students as they prepare for post-secondary options. This includes providing students and families with support in completing the FAFSA.

While the measure does provide an option to opt-out of FAFSA completion, the Department is concerned about the negative messaging that comes across when promoting a policy of FAFSA for all students when not all students are eligible. Making families formally declare they want to opt-out of FAFSA completion may draw unwanted attention to private issues that students are grappling with, such as court involvement, legal tax issues, undocumented status, or other family hardships. The emotional well-being of students and the positive relationships between schools and families are at risk when we obligate students to fill out this form. High schools are actively working to provide needed supports for families without having them formally declare they are in need.

Finally, should this measure continue to move forward, the Department is grateful for the proposed appropriation which would be necessary to shoulder the added responsibilities mandated by this bill. However, we do ask that this appropriation not affect the priorities proposed in the Department's Board-approved budget.

Given the Department's ongoing work and commitment in supporting students and families in completing applications for post-secondary education and the desire for more evidence that FAFSA completion has the intended positive impact on college enrollment, the Department wishes to defer this bill to provide time for definitive data to be collected prior to committing to a mandated FAFSA requirement.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



JOHN S.S. KIM
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 2088 HD1 Relating to Education
DATE: March 13, 2020
TIME: 2:55 P.M.
COMMITTEE: Committee on Education and Committee on Higher Education
ROOM: Conference Room 229
FROM: Yvonne Lau, Interim Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Kidani, Chair Kim, and members of the Committees:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony to provide **COMMENTS on HB 2088 HD1**. This measure provides funds to establish a working group to create a state plan to make FAFSA completion or an opt-out waiver for FAFSA completion a graduation requirement by the 2022-2023 school year.

The Commission takes no position on whether completion of the FAFSA should be a graduation requirement. The Commission encourages that this **measure be amended to include a representative of the public charter school system** to ensure that public charter schools have the opportunity to provide input and perspective on this proposed change to graduation requirements. Public charter schools are required to follow the graduation requirements as determined by the Board of Education (BOE), unless a waiver from these requirements is granted by the BOE. As such, charter schools should have a place on the working group in order to have a voice in the decision-making process and in the creation of the state plan pertaining to FAFSA completion.

The Commission looks forward to collaborating with the committee, the DOE, other interested stakeholders, and public charter schools in moving this legislation forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

STATE OF HAWAII
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT BUILDING
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 107
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: 808-586-1400 FAX: 808-586-1412
EMAIL: oip@hawaii.gov

To: Senate Committees on Education and on Higher Education

From: Cheryl Kakazu Park, Director

Date: March 13, 2020, 2:55 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

Re: Testimony on H.B. No. 2088, H.D. 1
Relating to Education

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill, which would establish a working group to create a state plan to make FAFSA completion, or an opt-out waiver for FAFSA completion, a statewide graduation requirement. The Office of Information Practices (OIP) takes no position on the substance of this bill, but has comments and a recommendation regarding the bill's proposed exemption from the Sunshine Law, part I of chapter 92.

This bill proposes to completely exempt the working group from the Sunshine Law, although it would require it to post some form of minutes with no set requirement as to their level of detail or when they must be posted. It is not obvious why the proposed working group would need a complete exemption from the Sunshine Law to be able to effectively consider the proposal to make FAFSA completion a high school graduation requirement, as the issues it is required to consider do not seem to be ones that would involve discussions of individually identifiable student information on any kind of a regular basis. Further, OIP notes that the proposal to require students to complete the FAFSA to graduate from high

school is likely to be of high interest to public high school students and their parents or guardians, particularly since completing the FAFSA requires a student's parents or guardians to provide extensive financial information and tax return information. It is likely that members of the public will be interested in weighing in on this issue, yet this bill would not allow them to provide testimony to the working group or attend its meetings, but only to read minutes posted at some unspecified time after a meeting has taken place.

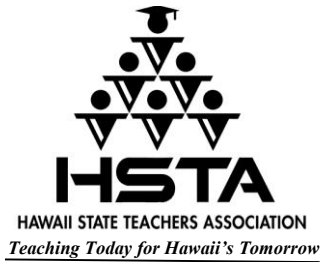
OIP notes that the proposed working group includes many government officials and employees who may need to discuss college financial aid issues with one another as part of their usual jobs. If there is a concern that the Sunshine Law's requirements would constrain their ability to talk with one another about financial aid issues as needed for their usual jobs, these Committees could address that by adding a permitted interaction allowing less than a quorum of members to talk about board business together, while still allowing for public participation consistent with the purpose and intent of the Sunshine Law.

Thus, OIP would strongly recommend that these Committees either remove entirely the Sunshine Law exemption at bill page 5, lines 17-21, or replace it with a permitted interaction allowing less than a quorum of members to talk together. If the Committees prefer the option of replacing the exemption with a permitted interaction, OIP would recommend the following language:

Two or more members of the working group, but less than the number of members that would constitute a quorum for the working group, may discuss between

themselves matters relating to official business of the working group to enable them to faithfully perform their duties to the working group and the organizations they represent, as long as no commitment to vote is made or sought. Such discussions shall be a permitted interaction under section 92-2.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Thank you for the considering our comments and recommendation.



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

Corey Rosenlee
President
Osa Tui, Jr.
Vice President
Logan Okita
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION and THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

RE: HB 2088, HD1 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Kidani, Chair Kim, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports HB 2088, HD1, with amendments** that will establish a working group to create a state plan to make FAFSA completion a statewide graduation requirement and an opt-out waiver for FAFSA completion by the 2022-2023 school year. **We ask for amendments to this bill to ensure that when creating this working group, high school counselors are invited to join this working group, and supported. High School Counselors are the ones who will be directly providing these services to our students, and will have the most valuable input as to what is needed with the end point in deciding if motivating more students to complete their FAFSA requires it being a graduation requirement, or not. The working group should determine what is needed.**

Motivating more students and providing resources to assist them in completing their FAFSA will help ensure that high school graduates don't miss out on post-secondary educational opportunities merely because they can't pay for it. Multiple financial aid options are available for students who apply, including federal grants, loans, or work-study. Encouraging students to apply and forming this working group to determine what will support our students more and will help dispel the common misconception students have that they won't qualify for available aid. According to an analysis by NerdWallet, high school graduates missed out on \$2.3 billion in federal grants in 2017 simply because they failed to fill out the FAFSA. Among those who didn't apply, most said it was because they didn't think they would qualify.

In addition to matching students with the financial aid they are eligible for, research shows that students who complete a FAFSA are more likely to attend a two- or four-year college or vocational/technical school which is another positive outcome for FAFSA completion. According to the National College Access Network (NCAN),

“Ninety percent of high school seniors who complete the FAFSA proceed directly to college, versus only 55 percent who don’t complete the FAFSA.”

To increase access to higher education among our high school students, the **Hawaii State Teachers Association** asks you to support this bill with suggested amendments.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirtieth Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Education
Committee on Higher Education

LATE

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

March 12, 2020

H.B. 2088 H.D. 1 — Relating To Education

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO opposes H.B. 2088, which establishes a working group to create a state plan to make FAFSA completion a statewide graduation requirement and an opt—out waiver for FAFSA completion by the 2022-2023 school year.

We cannot support this measure for several reasons. First, it assumes that college is the only path every graduating high school student takes. The FAFSA should not be required for those who choose to take a different path such as military service or opt to directly enter a trade or the workforce. Many are even delaying their post-secondary education to volunteer or explore career opportunities before deciding on whether college is the right path for them.

Secondly, the FAFSA in its current form is very cumbersome and many families need assistance in completing it. We are aware of middle-class parents who go through the arduous process of filling out the FAFSA as each of their children become seniors yet they never qualify for financial aid. While some are in the upper middle class or higher, most are average income earners who need the financial aid but only qualify for loans, not grants. The FAFSA does not take into consideration the high cost of living in Hawaii.

Finally, we know that there are a variety of other legitimate reasons why parents choose not to complete the FAFSA nor complete an opt-out waiver if given the choice. Why should their children not be allowed to graduate?

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition of H.B. 2088.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

March 13, 2020

Committee on Education
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Committee on Higher Education
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chairs Kidani and Kim and Members of the Committee,

HawaiiKidsCAN strongly supports HB 2088 HD1, which establishes a working group to create a state plan to make the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion a statewide requirement with an opt-out waiver for parents by the 2022-2023 school year, and appropriates funds to support this working group.

We believe this is an incredibly important measure, and we would like to highlight a few key points in particular:

- **Independent effort:** We believe that the working group created by this bill should sit outside similar efforts existing within the Hawaii State Department of Education (DOE), as it is incredibly important to ensure external voices are at the table and have equal weight. Similarly, we think the working group must have the explicit task of helping prepare the state for a FAFSA graduation requirement starting in 2022, which will add critical urgency and accountability around this effort.
- **Bold step needed:** While much great work has happened around the state to support FAFSA completions, the reality is that our data has moved only incrementally in the last four years, and our current path makes it incredibly unlikely Hawaii closes the large gap between last year's 60% completion rate and the DOE's goal for 90% completions by the 2020 school year. In fact, **Hawaii is on track to have a lower FAFSA completion rate that we had last year**, as of March 11. A graduation requirement would be a bold step forward to shake up the status quo and ensure local students don't continue to lose out on millions of dollars in federal financial because of this incremental growth. To say

this policy isn't needed at this time is to say that our state doesn't believe all students should know their options to afford and attend a 2 or 4 year college.

- **Protection for undocumented and vulnerable families:** It is simply not accurate to say HB 2088 HD1 would negatively impact vulnerable families or those with undocumented status. This bill clearly establishes an unconditional opt-out mechanism, and there is no connection between opting out and being the focus of law or immigration enforcement activities. Such coordination between schools and these enforcement agencies would be incredibly inappropriate and likely illegal. Louisiana, the first state to implement FAFSA as a graduation requirement, authorized schools to apply for hardship waivers in sensitive cases where trusted school staff and counselors recognize extenuating circumstances for non-participation. There have been no reports from Louisiana that students are being targeted due to opting out of FAFSA completion or receiving a hardship waiver.
- **FAFSA graduation requirement policy works:** HawaiiKidsCAN has spoken directly with leaders in Louisiana, which is a national success story, jumping from 44% in FAFSA completions to nearly 80%. Nearly 1,600 more students enrolled in college as a result versus the previous year, and over 2,500 more students of color, nearly 5,000 more economically disadvantaged students, and 400 more students with disabilities enrolled in college in 2018 than did in 2012.¹ Because of Louisiana's success, it is no surprise that a number of other states are looking at implementing a similar approach, and Hawaii has the opportunity to be part of this early wave of states, helping our students compete for successfully for financial aid before the rest of the country also implements such policies and deepens the pool of applicants.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a local nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities and, in turn, has a transformational impact on our children and our state. We strongly believe that all students should have access to excellent educational opportunities, regardless of family income levels and circumstances.

Given Hawaii's low unemployment rate and high cost of living, a post-secondary associate's or bachelor's degree is increasingly important for local students. The Hawaii P-20 Initiative's 55 goal to have 55% of adults earn a college degree by 2025 is making progress, although recent attainment is still at 46.3%.

FAFSA completion is critical component for increasing access and equity in higher education, as it is the form students need to fill out to get any financial aid from the federal government to help pay for college. Each year, over 13 million students who file the FAFSA get more than \$120 billion in grants, work-study, and low-interest loans from the U.S. Department of Education.

¹ Staff, Louisiana Department of Education. (2019, May 22). NUMBER OF LOUISIANA GRADUATES ENROLLING IN COLLEGE CLIMBS TO ALL-TIME HIGH. Retrieved from <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/newsroom/news-releases/2019/05/22/number-of-louisiana-graduates-enrolling-in-college-climbs-to-all-time-high>

The FAFSA is also an important pre-requisite for many other need- and merit-based forms of financial aid, including the Hawaii Promise scholarship.

FAFSA completion is also strongly correlated to college access, as 90% of high school seniors nationally who complete FAFSA attend college directly from high school.² Students in the lowest economic quintile who completed the FAFSA were 127% more likely to enter college than students who did not.³ Other benefits include a potential edge in college admissions, as admissions officers know that students hoping for aid who don't submit FAFSAs to the college are less likely to enroll.⁴

We are excited about the many important outreach efforts already happening in Hawaii schools, including the Cash for College challenge and text message-based outreach, and we think a statewide plan to prepare for a FAFSA graduation requirement would greatly boost this work. We believe this plan will be a rallying cry for the community, and a way to increase support for counselors and encourage local tax preparation companies to provide pro bono consultation to local families. HawaiiKidsCAN strongly believes HB 2088 HD1 is an important step forward for our students and broader community.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN

² Abigail Hess, CNBC. (2018, October 2). The FAFSA is now open—here's why every student should fill it out. Retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/09/28/why-every-student-should-fill-out-the-fafsa.html>

³ Bill DeBaun, National College Access Network (2019, December 3). FAFSA Completion by District Poverty Level Across the United States. Retrieved from <https://public.tableau.com/profile/bill.debaun.national.college.access.network#!/vizhome/FAFSACompletionbyDistrictPovertyLevelAcrossTheUnitedStates/Story1>

⁴ Staff, National College Planning Solutions. (2016, January 8). 3 Reasons You Should Fill Out the FAFSA—No Matter How Rich You Are. Retrieved from <https://ncps.com/3-reasons-you-should-fill-out-the-fafsa-no-matter-how-rich-you-are/>

SB2296/HB2088 FAFSA working group bill
Frequently Asked Questions

1) Does FAFSA completion increase college access?

- Students who complete the FAFSA are more likely to enroll in college; 90 percent of students who complete the FAFSA enroll in college directly from high school, compared to just 55 percent of non-completers
- HawaiiKidsCAN has spoken directly with leaders in Louisiana, which is a national success story, jumping from 44% in FAFSA completions to nearly 80%.
 - Nearly 1,600 more students enrolled in college as a result versus the previous year, and over 2,500 more students of color, nearly 5,000 more economically disadvantaged students and 400 more students with disabilities enrolled in college in 2018 than did in 2012

2) Where did the \$10 million figure in lost financial aid for Hawaii students come from?

- The \$10 million figure was used in official DOE materials and cited by the Honolulu Star-Advertiser. This was measured in unclaimed federal Pell Grants, which require the FAFSA.

3) Shouldn't the state be looking beyond just FAFSA completion at additional supports for students in the college application process?

- Both versions of the bill specifically include these provisions
 - “Consider additional resources and supports needed and available, including public-private partnerships, to ensure successful implementation of the state plan;”
 - “How to best provide greater support for students through the entire college application process, including providing the necessary guidance for students to actually enroll in college and be successful once the FAFSA is completed”

4) Some parents don't file taxes and are fearful that they will be "caught" by the IRS. Some students have incarcerated parents, some are students are undocumented fearing deportation and some students have parents that outright REFUSE to complete the FAFSA.

- This bill clearly establishes an unconditional opt-out mechanism, and the model effort in Louisiana also included family hardship waivers schools can use for unresponsive families
- There is no connection between opting out and being the focus of law or immigration enforcement activities. Such coordination between schools and these enforcement agencies would be incredibly inappropriate and likely illegal. No such cases have been reported in Louisiana.

5) Completing the FAFSA is a personal choice, regardless if we agree or not. Are we really going to withhold issuing a diploma to a student whose parent does NOT complete the FAFSA?

- The bill would establish an unconditional opt-out mechanism to protect personal choice, so no diplomas would be withheld.
- Rather than forcing anyone to do something they don't want to do, this bill helps to create a subtle mindset shift around college access by asking students and schools “why not” know financial aid options vs “why should.” This is similar to efforts in support of

automatic voter registration, which are predicated on the idea of increasing voter participation.

6) Some of our students choose to join the military or the workforce. They do not need to complete the FAFSA. Why would we force them to do something that is unnecessary in order to receive their diploma?

- Students can still pursue the interests and passions of their choosing, but we think it is helpful for them to at least know the federal financial aid available to them. This could be incredibly valuable as they decide on their post-secondary options.

7) By adding FAFSA completion as a graduation requirement, will we be limiting our ability to help those that really want to submit the FAFSA to help fund their college education?

- By making FAFSA a graduation requirement, it will only increase the attention and support on this whole process and increase the ability to support students. A graduation requirement for FAFSA would help enhance quality efforts already happening.



**Testimony to the Senate Committees on Education and Higher Education
Friday, March 13, 2020 at 2:55 P.M.
Conference Room 229, State Capitol**

RE: HB 2088 HD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chairs Kidani and Kim, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports** HB 2088 HD1, which would establish a working group to create a state plan to make FAFSA completion a statewide graduation requirement and an opt-out waiver for FAFSA completion by the 2022-2023 school year and appropriate funds.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

In 2018, Hawaii students left \$10 million in unclaimed federal Pell Grants, while nationally, that total was nearly \$2.6 billion in unclaimed federal financial aid for higher education for high school graduates of the class of 2018 as a result of not filling out FAFSA applications despite being eligible. It is estimated that 90% of students who complete the FAFSA will attend college, as opposed to 55% of those who don't. The Hawaii Department of Education has set a goal to have 90% of high school seniors complete the FAFSA for the 2020 year, but there are some worries that this goal will not be met.

By creating this working group, the state can take the first step to guaranteeing that we are able to help our students with completing the FAFSA for those considering post-secondary education. Students who might not have thought they could go to college due to financial situations, may now have an opportunity to do so, because of the access to federal aid. We need to help ensure that our students are offered the best education in order to prepare them for college and their future roles in the workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2088 HD1.



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON
EDUCATION & HIGHER EDUCATION
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 229
FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020 AT 2:55 P.M.**

To The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair;
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair;
Members of the Committee on Education;

To The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair;
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair;
Members of the Committee on Higher Education;

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2088 RELATING TO EDUCATION

Aloha, my name is Pamela Tumpap and I am the President of the Maui Chamber of Commerce, with approximately 650 members. I am writing share our support of HB2088.

The Maui Chamber of Commerce supports a working group to look at how students who want to go to college and their parents can be encouraged to and receive more help to complete FAFSA. According to the FAFSA website, it takes an average of 55 minutes to complete the form, plus additional hours to collect the needed information. This can be overwhelming for parents and students alike and support and education on this process would be valuable. This is an important effort to capture federal money to get those students to college with better opportunities and will need special resources, outreach and education to parents and students.

However, we ask that this bill be amended to remove the suggestion of FAFSA completion or an opt-out waiver be a requirement for graduation. Some students do not want to go to college and families should be proud of their children wanting to enter the workforce and not have to sign an opt-out waiver that has no benefit. For students who meet the requirements, there should never be an impediment for graduation. We feel the working group should be empowered to create a plan to get more FAFSA's completed in a positive manner without this restriction.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this matter and provide comments and ask that this bill be passed.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

S.B. 2296 SD 2 FAFSA; Graduation Requirement; Working Group; Appropriation

I am submitting written testimony regarding the new bill, S.B. 2296 SD 2. In my previous testimony I stated that I am **opposed** to this bill because college is not a requirement and having it become a graduation requirement is outrageous and without merit. In looking at this new bill, it implies that I'm not doing anything or my fellow counselors are not doing anything to address this problem. We, the professionals are already doing the work to get students and families to complete the FAFSA and help them get to college. We do not need a law to do this work! Whoever chooses to go to college, we help them.

Every year, my school and other schools have competed in Hawaii P-20 Cash for College. I've mentioned it my previous testimony. My school has won 2 years in a row, and this year we are making strides again. All the schools have made strides, and this bill makes it seem like we aren't. We're doing what we're supposed to do and we're doing it the best we can.

In this bill on page 3, #3, 5, 6, where it asks for additional resources and support that are necessary, setting up a pilot programs by complex area or island; and consider the best ways to support students through the entire college application; this is already being done through partnerships from our school's Counseling departments, Advisory classes, UH & its campuses, Upward Bound, Lili'uokalani Trust, Alu Like, DVR and other agencies. Schools on every island should consider partnering with other agencies in their communities. It's easier, at least from my experience and we know it benefits students and their families. The working group may not be needed.

In my previous testimony, I mentioned that a student under the age of 24 cannot apply for financial aid without their parent's tax information. This is a key fact when applying for FAFSA. You have many students who fall into this category and it is something you cannot "Pass Go" without it. Ask any financial aid office about this rule and they will tell you. However, there are certain instances that can be overridden if you were a ward of the state or in foster care or if you have a dependent. Also, completing the FAFSA does not mean students will get money. Every family is different and not everyone can or will get the same or anything.

If the State of Hawaii and other states make changes to this rule (at the federal level), then maybe we'll have more students completing the FAFSA and attending college. Until that is fixed, we're stuck.

Now what will the State of Hawaii do for those students who do not want to attend college? What if they just want to work? Why would they fill out the FAFSA? In this instance, why would it be a graduation requirement? It seems to me, they're rights are being taken away or something being shoved down their throats. What does the Office of Curriculum Instruction (OCID) think about this new bill? Are they part of the discussion?

I am really in support of students continuing their education beyond high school, but they have to really want it and plan it out and have the full support of their family(ies). At this time in their lives, they have doubts of what's ahead for them and we want them to choose for themselves on how they are going to live it. If college & FAFSA is not in the cards for them when they're seniors in high school, they can do it when they are ready. After all, FAFSA is for everybody (all ages) and they can do it anytime.

Mahalo,
Mahina Kamakana-Juario
Counselor
Molokai High School
808-567-7175

March 12, 2020

Senate Committee on Education
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Senator Kidani and Senator Kim,

I am a teacher at Waiʻanae Intermediate School and I am proud to support HB2088 HD1 because I have continued to witness the impact of outside factors beyond school influence student's ability to learn and pursue further education. Some of my students have experienced an abusive home life; others have been subjugated to being the primary care taker for their younger siblings. Students are often physically and emotionally drained, leaving little room for them to plan out all the logistics of trying to pursue college. I support the creation of a working group to develop a state plan for making the FAFSA a graduation requirement (or opt out process), because it will give support to students who have traditionally not had any as they look to attend college.

As educators, we are tasked to provide a space for all students to develop the foundational skills to be successful in their future careers, college often being the next step after high school. I feel that it is a disservice to students if we are not providing adequate transition support from high school to college when it is a pivotal moment in a youth's life. I support HB2088 HD1 because it will aid our students in the process of getting to college. Even if students don't initially want to attend college, they should be aware of the option and that it can be financially affordable through the right avenues.

Mahalo,



Alika Masei

HB-2088-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 3:45:08 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/13/2020 2:55:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Aisha Heredia | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

March 11, 2020

Senate Committee on Education
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha,

I'm proud to **support HB2088 HD1** because it will increase opportunities for high school students to access funding for higher education. Every year students could have a shot at educational grants, but because students do not know how to fill out the FASFA, or are intimidated by the process, helpful grants that students can use are not accessed. Some students whom I have helped with the application process feel that it's confusing, and I do think families who are new immigrants, or have language barriers do not apply because they do not know how to navigate the FASFA application.

I am in **strong support HB2088 HD1** because it will establish a state plan to make FAFSA completion a statewide graduation requirement. *There may already be a HIDOE working group, but it is not effective if there isn't collaboration with families, and advocates who understand new immigrant struggles.* I would like to see an outside of HIDOE working group formed because this group has the ability to bring in stake holders from all aspects of the school community and outside of the school community such as legal support, or social service support workers who understand new immigrant populations. The support we give to students accessing higher education, comes back to us in an educated, highly talented and skilled workforce.

Mahalo,
Aisha Heredia

HB-2088-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 4:53:26 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/13/2020 2:55:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lawson Fernandes | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

I am in support of this bill. Making the FAFSA a requirement would really help students pay find out what they are eligible for and maybe the results would differ from what they would assume. This could really help them weigh out their options on which colleges to go to as well. Plus, they would resort in taking private outside loans which normally has higher interest rates because it may be too late for them to apply for the FAFSA.

HB-2088-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2020 11:00:41 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/13/2020 2:55:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sheldon Tawata | Individual | Comments | No |

Comments:

Thank you once again for the opportunity to submit a testimony on House Bill (HB) 2088. As a professional who works in post-secondary education with colleagues at various high schools across the state, I am concerned with adding another requirement that comes with added expenses (time and money) to an already taxed organization (the Hawai'i State Department of Education). I know counselors who work tirelessly to encourage students to meet high school graduation requirements, which at times could be as critical as attendance. These individuals put in evenings and weekends to make sure students are on track toward a goal (or goals) that are most appropriate and supports personal and academic growth. I feel rather than designing a work group, I feel it would be worth acknowledging these counselors as content experts and provide an arena for them to flush out ideas that work best for students whom they see on a regular basis. I can't imagine the extra time and resources that will be allocated toward this proposal versus using that time and resources assisting students. "Members of the working group shall serve without compensation but shall receive reimbursement for expenses, including travel expenses, that are necessary for the performance of their duties." Majority of the testimonies highlighted the benefit of financial aid, which I can agree and support 100%. I work with many students who have benefited from FAFSA and other aid such as Scholarships, that helped their college education. But I think HD 2088 doesn't provide a complete picture and doesn't address the current work of those who meet with students on a DAILY basis. Were any counselors and post-secondary financial aid specialist consulted when this Bill was drafted and amended? Or are we chasing numbers with minimal research on the existing initiatives happening locally at the various schools? I'm very worried that this bill doesn't give the proper recognition to those who truly help students make that transition into post-secondary education, also the implementation of this amended HB was not inclusive to allow the voices from those who work directly with students. Even the make up of the work group appears very limited, allowing only select voices at the table. I hope the State and those who crafted this HB takes a moment to self reflect and think how funds can be used more effectively to assist our youth.

HB-2088-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 8:35:41 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/13/2020 2:55:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Therize Millare | Testifying for maui high school | Support | No |

Comments:

My name is Therize Millare, I am a junior at Maui High school. The measure I am testifying on relates to education and I am testifying in support of HB2088.

HB2088 is a measure relating to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, also known as the FAFSA and Hawaii's graduation requirements. What this bill aims to do is to create a working group dedicated to making the FAFSA a high school graduation requirement with an optional opt out waiver by the 2022-2023 school year.

Every year, the US Department of Education devotes more than \$120 billion to funding the education of more than 13 million college students nationwide. Students are given access to federal grants, loans, and work-studies by filling out the FAFSA.

However, it has been reported by the National College Access Network that college students who did not complete the FAFSA nationwide are missing out on a total of \$24 billion annually in Pell Grants, subsidized student loans, work-study, and state aid programs. That is an extremely large sum of money, and this statistic stresses why investing in FAFSA completion is so crucial.

HB2088 is not the first of its kind. Bills similar to this one that made the FAFSA a graduation requirement have been passed in Illinois, Louisiana and Texas, and are being highly considered in California. After the bills passed in those three states, FAFSA completion has risen almost and graduation rates have increased to an all time high. It can be concluded that bills of this nature are highly effective and their results are immensely positive.

HB2088 is a bill that will spur real positive change in the education of Hawaii's youth. Making the FAFSA a graduation requirement will make college more possible for a large number of Hawaii highschool students. Although forming a task group to achieve this goal will cost money, it's price will be minimal and nothing is more valuable than education and opportunity.

HB-2088-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 9:43:24 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/13/2020 2:55:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Kami Echiverri | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

House Bill, No. 2088

Aloha,

My name is Kami Echiverri and I am testifying in favor of House Bill, No. 2088, Relating to Education. This bill gives equal opportunity to teens in Hawaii with low income families. Not a lot of people talk about what FAFSA is and how much of a difference it could make with tuition.

FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. There's no fee to apply for the FAFSA and students have a chance to receive state and federal financial aid. Hawaii's teens have a lot of potential, but a lot of them don't get the chance to get exposed to what they could do. Filling out the FAFSA could be that little push that students need. I strongly recommend passing House Bill, No. 2088. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Kami Echiverri, Kahului

HB 2088 RELATING TO EDUCATION

My name is Alana Motley and I am a senior at Maui High school. The measure I am testifying on relates to education. I am testifying in support of HB2088.

HB2088 is a measure relating to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, also known as the FAFSA and Hawaii's graduation requirements. What this bill aims to do is to create a working group dedicated to making the FAFSA a high school graduation requirement with an optional opt out waiver by the 2022-2023 school year.

Every year, the US Department of Education devotes more than \$120 billion to funding the education of more than 13 million college students nationwide. Students are granted access to federal grants, loans, and work-studies by filling out the FAFSA.

However, it has been reported by the National College Access Network that college students who did not complete the FAFSA nationwide are missing out on a total of \$24 billion annually in Pell Grants, subsidized student loans, work-study, and state aid programs. That is an extremely large sum of money, and this statistic stresses why investing in FAFSA completion is so crucial.

HB2088 is not the first of its kind. Bills similar to this one that made the FAFSA a graduation requirement have been passed in Illinois, Louisiana and Texas, and are being highly considered in California. After the bills passed in those three states, FAFSA completion has dramatically risen and graduation rates have increased to an all time high. It can be concluded that bills of this nature are highly effective and their results are immensely positive.

HB2088 is a bill that will spur real positive change in the education of Hawaii's youth. Making the FAFSA a graduation requirement will make college more possible for a large number of Hawaii high school students. Although forming a task group to achieve this goal will cost money, its price will be minimal and nothing is more valuable than education and opportunity.

Alana Motley
Maui High School

Bill No. 2088

Hello. My name is Jayden Collado. I am a high school student from the island of Maui. I am testifying in support of House Bill 2088. This bill will have a positive effect on many individuals and will push us towards the state's 55 by '25 goal.

I am a supporter of this proposed bill because it will provide more significant opportunities for high schoolers to achieve a higher level of education. Simply encouraging students to complete the FAFSA is not enough. By making the FAFSA a requirement to graduate, Hawaii is taking steps to use all its resources. This bill will also encourage students to stay in Hawaii for their education. That makes them more likely to begin their career in Hawaii. Additionally, this proposal will directly affect students who are uncertain about college or believe that they make too much money to receive any aid. This bill will have a grand effect on students; there are only disadvantages to not completing the FAFSA. Finally, the committee that will be established ensures that this bill will go into effect responsibly and conscientiously.

These are just a few reasons for this bill to pass. I am sure that there are many more reasons than what I have listed. This bill will prove valuable to our future. Forging our path to success is found in this exact bill.

Jayden Collado
Kahului, HI

HB-2088-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 12:46:40 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/13/2020 2:55:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Brian Kamau | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

March 13, 2020

Senate Committee on Education
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chairs Kidani and Kim, and esteemed committee members,

I am a community member from Hilo Hawaii and I'm proud to support HB2088 HD1 because it will increase opportunities for high school students to access funding for higher education. Every year there are \$10 million in funds that are not used for grants to students in Hawaii because students do not apply for FAFSA, or know that they are available through FAFSA.

I support HB2088 HD1 because it will establish a working group that can determine how to implement a graduation requirement, OR an opt-out option, for students to complete the FAFSA. If this is a requirement then schools can provide better resources, like in-class support for students to fill out the FAFSA application. The current Department Of Education working group that addresses FAFSA does not have a state plan that creates these opportunities. The more support we give to student success is an investment in our future, and sometimes, as in this case we have to make requirements so that it is actually discussed and practiced at every school.

Mahalo,

Brian Kamau

HB-2088-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 2:07:28 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/13/2020 2:55:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ruston Utu | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

I support this bill. I think it would be a great idea to make this a requirement. A lot of high school students are immediately discouraged because of the cost of college. However, if they actually submit the FAFSA, they may be surprised with how much financial aid they can receive.