



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

Date: 02/06/2020

Time: 02:10 PM

Location: 309

Committee: House Lower & Higher
Education

Department: Education

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

Title of Bill: HB 2088 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.

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of HB 2088 and respectfully offers comments.

The purpose of HB 2088 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 and continues efforts to improve successful FAFSA completion rates.

The Department has established a 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, with a goal of providing a statewide approach to increase awareness of FAFSA to, in turn, increase completion rates. This working group conducted a media campaign, created resources, and built data dashboards to provide schools with the tools they need to support this effort.

The Department has also established the College & Career Counselor Professional Learning Community (PLC) comprised of 96 counselors from 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.

Efforts of these two groups as well as at the school level have resulted in Hawai'i's FAFSA completion rate being above the national average the last two years without it being a graduation requirement. Hawai'i's FAFSA completion rate was 59.1% for the Class of 2018 (18th in the nation) and 59.2% for the Class of 2019 (17th in the nation). Both the working group and the PLC monitor Hawai'i's FAFSA completion data as well as the completion data of other states through the National College Access Network to determine if FAFSA completion has the intended impact on college enrollment.

The Personal Transition Plan (PTP) is a 0.5 credit required for graduation. Schools are empowered to tailor their curriculum to address such topics as interest inventory, career exploration, goal-setting, college readiness, job preparation, and other topics of student interest. Each school may decide on whether completing the FAFSA is required to earn the PTP credit.

Further, mandating students to complete the FAFSA as a graduation requirement may be perceived as invading family privacy and may negatively affect relationships formed at the school. Requiring an opt-out waiver also prevents any further attempt for counselors to assist students and families with FAFSA completion which is counterproductive to the goals of HB 2088. High schools are actively working to provide support for students and families that voluntarily seek assistance and without having them formally declare they are in need.

Given the Department's ongoing work and commitment to supporting students and their families in completing applications for post-secondary education and the lack of evidence proving that a mandatory FAFSA policy results in higher college enrollment, the Department respectfully suggests that this measure is not necessary at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2088.

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.

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: House Committee on Lower & Higher Education

From: Cheryl Kakazu Park, Director

Date: February 6, 2020, 2:10 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

Re: Testimony on H.B. No. 2088
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.



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

February 6, 2019

Committee on Lower & Higher Education
Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair
Rep. Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair

State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chairs Hashem and Quinlan, and Members of the Committee,

HawaiiKidsCAN strongly supports HB 2088, 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 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.

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 currently on track to have a lower FAFSA completion rate than we had last year. 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.

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. 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.¹ Students in the lowest economic quintile who completed the FAFSA were 127% more likely to enter college than students who did not.² 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.³

HawaiiKidsCAN has spoken directly with leaders in Louisiana, which is a national success story, jumping from 44% in FAFSA completions to nearly 80%. Much of this success is driven by making FAFSA completion a graduation requirement, while providing an opt-out waiver to parents and a hardship waiver to schools to use for sensitive cases where parents may be non-responsive due to immigration status or other extenuating circumstances. 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.

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

¹ 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>

² Bill DeBaunm, 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>

³ 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/>

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 is an important step forward for our students and broader community.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN



2112 Hillhaven Dr., Brea, CA 92821 execjimenez@aol.com

IN SUPPORT HB2088

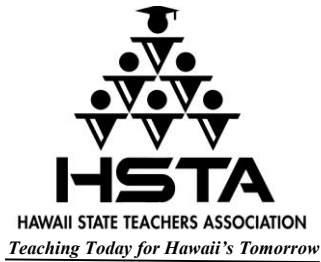
My name is Elizabeth Jiménez Salinas and I am an educational consultant working with teachers in schools and school districts throughout the United States, including Hawai'i. Hawai'i needs more teachers. So, more local students need to go to University in order to fulfill that need. For most students to afford to do that, they need financial aid. The first step towards receiving financial aid is to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

I ask you to support HB2088 to initiate the formation of a working group to examine any current barriers and determine ways to increase the FAFSA completion rate amongst high school graduates.

The FAFSA has a longstanding reputation for being complex and confusing so families need assistance, students need a clear understanding of the timeline for completion, and all high school faculty need a clear understanding and the tools to incentivize students in this process. The idea of this legislation is to study ways to eliminate a potential barrier for our students to qualify for aid to attend college.

Not only would the requirement that ALL students complete and submit the FAFSA, eliminate a barrier to potential student college participation, it would create a shared urgency amongst high school faculty to reach out to ALL students.

I also recommend that the bill specify that the working group membership include a member with English Learner expertise to help the group consider ways to provide much broader language access, and that as the working group examines ways to increase FAFSA completion that they research the areas of the state that currently have lower/higher completion rates, percentages of language groups that may have greater/lesser completion rates, and review the policies developed and adopted in other states to look for elements that might be useful here. Mahalo.



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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
LOWER & HIGHER EDUCATION

RE: HB 2088 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2020

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports HB 2088** which 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.

Making FAFSA completion a graduation requirement 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 by making it a graduation requirement 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.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Lower and Higher Education
Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 2:10 P.M.
Conference Room 309, State Capitol**

RE: HB 2088, RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Woodson, Vice Chairs Hashem and Quinlan, and Members of the Committees:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports** HB 2088, 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.

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 5:56:31 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dyson Chee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice-chairs Hashem and Quinlan, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dyson Chee and I am a 17 year old high schooler living in Ala Moana who supports HB2088. As a senior in high school, I have completed my FAFSA which will be critical for me when the time comes for me to pay for my college classes soon. Unfortunately, not everyone takes advantage of FAFSA, which means that students in the lowest economic quintile who did not complete the FAFSA are 127% less likely to enter college than students who did. I believe that making FAFSA completion a graduation requirement will help to increase the number of students who do take advantage of FAFSA. For this reason, I urge you to pass HB2088.

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 5:58:47 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Uyehara	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am submitting this as an individual and not on behalf of the University of Hawaii.

February 4, 2020

Committee on Lower & Higher Education

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair

Rep. Rep. Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chair Woodson and Vice Chairs Hashem and Quinlan,

I am a faculty researcher from the University of Hawaii, Manoa, College of Education, Center on Disability Studies, and I'm proud to support HB2088 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 FASFA, or know that they are available through FAS

I support HB2088 because it will establish a requirement, or an opt-out option, for students to complete the FASFA. If this is requirement than schools can provide better resources, like in-class support for students to fill out the FASFA application. The current Department Of Education working group that addresses FASFA does not have a state plan that makes FAFSA completion a statewide graduation requirement. 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,

Lisa Uyehara, M.A., J.D.

Principal Investigator, Assistant Specialist

Project Ho'oku'i III: Na Kumu Alaka'i

(#S362A180010)S362A180010S362A180010S362A180010

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 7:15:46 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Maria Angst	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I, Maria Angst, fully support this bill to create incentives for high schools to develop or expand career pathway programs. Being a senior at Molokai High School, I believe this will help spark and thrive students who want to have more learning opportunities in different career fields after high school.

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 7:35:02 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nancy Barry	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB 2296 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.

As a member of the Advisory Board of HawaiiKidsCAN, a local nonprofit organization, we believe that all students deserve access to quality educational opportunities. We are committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities.

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.

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

Hawaii has the opportunity to be part of an early wave of states that have adopted similar legislation, 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.

I urge your support of SB 2296.

Nancy Barry February 1, 2020

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 7:36:02 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Heath Williams	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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. It's a pain to complete and most 1st year college kids have no idea they need to do it until the very last minute. If this bill passes, Hawaii keiki will have a leg up in higher education. Strong support for this measure.

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/5/2020 6:46:59 AM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kekoa McClellan	The McClellan Group	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chairs Hashem and Quinlan, and Honorable members of the House Committee on Lower and Higher Education,

Please accept this testimony in strong support of HB2088. Much of the testimony in support of this measure will no doubt focus on the empirical data supporting the link between greater rates of college education (and more funding for public universities) where mandatory FAFSA completion has been rolled out across the Country. I would like to offer a more personal experience in the hopes of encouraging your support for this measure.

I come from a family of five boys, I am number two. My older brother and I, along with our middle brother were fortunate enough to attend private high schools in Hawaii where FAFSA completion was an expectation, not a choice. Two of the three older boys went on to enjoy our college years. Our youngest brothers attended the public high school in our neighborhood, where FAFSA completion was an exception, not a norm. We grew up in the same house, with the same parents, and the same familial expectations, values, and social quirks. Yet for my youngest two brothers, college was never on their radar.

For our youngest brothers, going to college just wasn't part of lunch hour talk in the circles they hung out with in high school. No counselor reached out to them to encourage going to college, even a community college, and no one outside our family showed them how college was both accessible and affordable.

By design, the FAFSA process would have given my brothers a road map to higher education. More importantly, by making the FAFSA completion mandatory, we would stimulate a system wide conversation about the accessibility and affordability of university. This measure is designed to help kids, like my brothers, who just needed a little more encouragement and direction.

Thank you for your time and your favorable consideration of HB2088.

Pepeluali 5, 2020

Committee on Lower and Higher Education

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair

Rep. Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha mai e honorable Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Hashem, a me Vice Chair Quinlan,

Na'ū nō, Phoenix Maimiti Valentine. Noho au ma Mākaha. He haumana au. Welina.
I'm Phoenix Maimiti Valentine. I reside in Mākaha. I am a student. Greetings!

I am proud to support **HB2088**.

Haumāna (students) throughout Hawai'i have the opportunity to apply for FAFSA, to help pursue their dreams of attending college with the financial aid it supplies. Many students like myself, will need financial support. **HB2088** introduces students to one possibility. With **HB2088** every student will know the potential of FAFSA, that it exists, and be required to seize allocated funds the US Government has for US citizens. Students in Hawai'i could benefit with guidance completing FAFSA forms. If there was a committee intent on helping students complete these forms, there would be a greater success rate for students who qualify financially.

HB2088 is a movement to empower students (with financial needs) to seek Higher Education. This effort, looks to the future. I believe you do too! Please support **HB2088** so Hawai'i may prosper with more possibilities of enlightenment, in Higher Education, that avails in more students.

Mahalo iā 'ōukou (Thank You all), Phoenix Maimiti Valentine

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/5/2020 8:53:13 AM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Committee on Lower & Higher Education
Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair
Rep. Rep. Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair

State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chair Woodson and Vice Chairs Hashem and Quinlan and esteemed committee,

I am a former educator that has worked with high schoolers in Title 1 schools. I'm **proud to support HB2088** because it will increase opportunities for high school students to access funding for higher education. Although there is already a DOE task force working on this issue, I do think there should be a team that has the community voice working on this issue, a team that incorporates the DOE but works together outside of the formal DOE as a statewide effort with school community members, policy makers, and everyday people.

From my own experience as a first generation immigrant that had to navigate college and grant applications by myself, families who have language barriers won't know how to navigate the FAFSA application or even know that it is available. There should be a strong voice from multiple stakeholders, not just the DOE, in this FAFSA working group.

I am in **strong support of HB2088** because it will establish a state plan to make the FAFSA working group a community effort.

Mahalo,
Aisha Heredia

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/5/2020 12:59:30 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
KianaRose K Dulan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Kiana Dulan, and I'm in support of HB 2088. Not many people may recognize the importance of filling out the FAFSA, so it would be helpful if this were a requirement.

Mahalo,

Kiana Dulan

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/5/2020 1:15:01 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stephanie Albaña	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To the honorable chair,

As a high school senior and resident of Hawaii, I believe that everyone should have the knowledge needed to fill out the FAFSA. I'm lucky to go to a private school and have a college coach that guides me through the FAFSA process, but I can't say the same for many public school students. Thanks to the FAFSA, I got the opportunity to claim money for college. Therefore, I really believe students should learn how to do it in class. I strongly believe that once we have a FAFSA workshop in classrooms, seniors in Hawaii would be more likely to fill it out.

Thankful for your time,

Stephanie Albaña

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/5/2020 1:15:16 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
George	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Completion of the fafsa **should not be** a graduation requirement. Successful completion of required academic courses alone should determine whether an individual earns a high school diploma. The decision to complete the fafsa should be left up to each individual family. The majority of families whose children plan to enroll directly into a 4-yr university/college will fill out the fafsa in order to qualify for whatever financial aid is available to them.

However, some families are aware they will not receive any aid because of their higher financial income so there will be no need for them to fill out the fafsa.

There are local and immigrant families who will not be sending their children to any post high school institutions. Many of these families, especially immigrant families, will not or are not able to complete the fafsa. They also will not want to release any of their financial information to anyone when they see no reason for it or if they will not derive any benefit from doing so.

What about high school graduates who are looking at a possible military career right out of high school? How will completing the fafsa help them with their career choice.

These are some examples where families have no need or reason to complete the fafsa but yet their child would not be able to receive their diploma because mom and dad failed to fill out a government form. There seems to be no logic in forcing families to fill out a lengthy form with sensitive information only because it's called, "a graduation requirement".

Is there a longitudinal study or some empirical data available that conclusively shows a direct correlation between high school students earning their diploma and completion of the fafsa?



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

LATE

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOWER & HIGHER EDUCATION
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 309
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2020 AT 2:10 P.M.**

To The Honorable Justin H. Woodson, Chair;
The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair;
The Honorable Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair; and
Members of the Committee on Lower & 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

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.

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/5/2020 2:44:37 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mahina Kamakana-Juario	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

H.B. No. 2088 FAFSA; Graduation Requirement; Working Group; Appropriation

I am submitting written testimony regarding H.B. No. 2088 concerning FAFSA being a graduation requirement and an opt-out waiver for FAFSA completion by the year 2022-2023 school year. I am in **opposition** of making this a graduation requirement because attending college is NOT a requirement. Attending college or vocational technical school is a choice and NOT mandatory. There are many reasons why this has become an issue because of the loss of funds students could have been eligible for last year. That is a horrible summation of what happened, but not necessary to forge a bill making it a graduation requirement. Graduation requirements are tough as it is and adding one more thing to the load does not compute. However, the opt-out waiver sounds amenable because it allows the student and parents to choose what they want to do after their child has graduated from high school.

In Section 2 (b) in regards to the working group, I agree, this is needed!!! My school already participates with the Hawaii P-20 Cash for College competition and we've done well for the past 2 years being awarded money for our senior classes for graduation, prom and other activities. The partnership is fantastic and last year more schools participated and they too, saw an increase in parent participation and FAFSA completion rose.

In Section 2 (c) ensuring that the opt-out process from FAFSA completion for parents is **simple** and **unconditional**; it must be understood by the student and the parents/guardians and those who assist them with the process; and 2 (c) (5) and support schools to provide hardship opt-out waivers on behalf of **unresponsive parents**; there are many MIA parents who deliberately undermine the success of their children and keep them in constant limbo and students end up retreating to parts unknown.

I don't agree with making this a graduation requirement, but this could present an opportunity for the DOE and possibly other state agencies who deal with FAFSA provide or introduce incentives for families to complete the FAFSA. For instance, provide dinner for families to come to a FAFSA Night at their schools with experts or

professionals to assist them with completing the FAFSA. Be creative with ways to get this done. Making it a graduation requirement is not the answer or solution.

Mahalo,

Mahina Kamakana-Juario

Molokai 2020

February 5, 2020

LATE

Committee on Lower & Higher Education
Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair
Rep. Rep. Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chair Woodson and Vice Chairs Hashem and Quinlan,

I support HB2088 as a 2019 graduate from a charter high school in Hawaii. I support this bill because I believe it will tremendously help students in Hawaii make college a plausible and realistic choice for them. If students have the resources and help in school to understand and complete the FAFSA, they are much more likely to complete it and attend school. Education, and making it more affordable for the youth of Hawaii to go on to higher education, should be a priority.

Mahalo,

Aleta Hammerich

LATE

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/5/2020 9:06:36 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
April Inouye	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

How does completing the FAFSA connect to changing the graduation requirements? These are two separate issues. As a public school, college and career counselor who counsels and works with students and families on the value of completing the FAFSA for college, this is a sensitive issue for some families. I offer FSA ID and FAFSA completion workshops, volunteer after hours (weekends and evenings) to support community completion events and many still choose NOT to complete the FAFSA. High income families find it a waste of time and WON'T complete it, even after being educated on the value of completing it. Other families don't file their Federal taxes for what ever reason and "won't" file their taxes or the FAFSA. A few of my students are undocumented students who "fear" deportation and have no means to complete it. A few struggle to get their incarcerated parent to complete the FAFSA. It's not without my best efforts to help students and students efforts who truly try to complete their FAFSA. COUNSELING students and families is a delicate balance of doing what I believe will help a student and being sensitive to their situation. This bill undermines the hard work and dedication of college & career counselors and other college admission professionals who educate, advise, support and counsel students to achieve their future post-high school goals. Allowing an opt-out process is NOT the solution.

This bill should NOT be considered for discussion as a graduation requirement. If you want to CHANGE the graduation requirements, focus on improving math scores, focus on improving pay for all who work in schools, focus on lowering high school class size, focus on dedicating more college & career counselor positions (without other added duties) so we CAN work with students to help them not only graduate from high school but to reach their desired post-high school goal. I strongly appose HB2088! Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

LATE

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/5/2020 10:36:06 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Eleyne Fia	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am a school counselor who works with students and their families. I assist them on their path to reach their college aspirations. One of the most important tasks they must do is to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). The FAFSA collects very personal information from both the student and parents. It is a bond of trust when the student and parents work with me in completing the FAFSA.

I have worked with students from two-parent households who need FAFSA and college help. But I have also worked with first-generation college-bound students, homeless students, students who are declared independent financially due to some unfortunate situation such as total parental abandonment or abuse, students with parents in prison, undocumented students who are fearful for their parents, students of poverty, and those of tragic incidents such as a deaths in the family, homes burnt or destroyed; and families on the edge of breaking down.

If completing the FAFSA becomes a graduation requirement, I am afraid they may not trust that my help is genuine. They may choose to immediately opt-out instead, and turn away from the chance to earn a college education. I need their trust, and they need my expertise.

In the end, whoever wants to do the FAFSA will do so. Then there are those who don't need to do it such as those who are entering the military, and they won't complete it. There are better ways to spend precious resources and money. We have a PLC (Professional Learning Community) made up of knowledgeable professionals with years of actual expertise in the college counseling field, who are dedicated to studying and brainstorming effective ways to raise FAFSA completion rates. And finally, please don't forget about those students who have so much going on in their lives, lack the college and FAFSA knowledge, and initially, they may not complete the FAFSA. Please help me reach these students by NOT making FAFSA completion a graduation requirement; to keep the trust between me and my students and their families so that together we can continue to make college attainable and sometimes, even bit more affordable.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your time.

Respectfully,

Eleyne Fia

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/6/2020 9:26:41 AM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Clara Kathman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair
Rep. Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair
COMMITTEE ON LOWER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

February 6, 2020

Support on House bill 2088 relating to education.

Hello, I am Clara Kathman a sophomore at Kalaheo High School and I fully support HB2088. This bill requires all students to fill out the FAFSA. The legislature has found that Hawaii left \$10,000,000 in unclaimed federal Pell Grants on the table in 2018. This would have been enough money to send roughly 2,500 of Hawaii's students to community college without having to spend a penny on tuition.

One credit at UH Manoa for a resident is a total of \$907. To get a four-year bachelor's degree you need roughly 15 credits a semester. This means a student would pay roughly \$13,600 for just one semester. That adds up to \$108,840, not including housing, books, or food. According to studentaid.gov students can receive roughly between \$5,500 and \$12,500. This means a student could have almost half of their tuition paid for. However, some students might never know if they didn't fill out the FAFSA.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I truly hope that you will support House Bill 2088.

HB-2088

Submitted on: 2/6/2020 9:27:35 AM

Testimony for LHE on 2/6/2020 2:10:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Gabrielle Goodgame	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

06 February 2020

To: Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair
Members of the Lower & Higher Education Committee

From: Gabrielle Goodgame

Subject: Support of House Bill 2088, Relating to Education

Hello, my name is Gabrielle Goodgame and I am currently a Junior at Kalaheo High School. I believe in House Bill 2088 and would like to ask for your support. I urge you to vote in favor of this bill that would increase opportunity for students to receive FAFSA money.

According to College Board, from 2001-02 through 2012-13, annual increases in published tuition and fees exceeding 5%. The state of Hawaii should provide opportunities for students to accommodate for this rise in costs for their education. As many as 44.7 million Americans have student loan debt, according to a 2018 report by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. To prevent students from Hawaii from contributing to this growing debt, the state-wide graduation requirement for FAFSA completion will greatly help.

If House Bill 2088 is passed, students' opportunity to receive FAFSA money will be greatly increased, and students like me can benefit from this change. Thank you for your time and consideration.