

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

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FOR: HB 246 RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS  
DATE: January 31, 2019  
TIME: 2:15 P.M.  
COMMITTEE: Committee on Lower & Higher Education  
ROOM: Conference Room 309  
FROM: Sione Thompson, Executive Director  
State Public Charter School Commission

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Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, and members of the Committee:

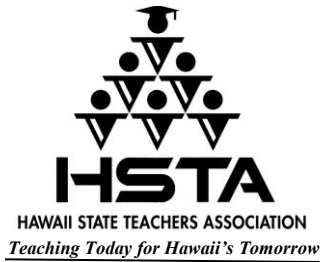
The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB246**. One of the Commission’s Standing Advocacy Principles, adopted in 2015, is that “charter schools must be funded and supported adequately to be able to meet the educational needs of their students... this includes funding and other supports for adequate facilities.”

Facilities costs for charter schools is one of the greatest unaddressed challenges for Hawaii’s chartering system. Facilities funding has been and continues to be a long-standing issue for charter schools.

In school year 2017-2018, charter schools expended approximately \$11.0 million for rent/lease payments, repair and maintenance, and utilities payments. The Commission determined this figure based on information provided from the annual audits that all charter schools are required to complete, pursuant to Section 302D-32, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

The needs of each individual charter school vary greatly as shown by a range of facility-related expenses, which start at about \$42,000 to a high of \$1.3 million. The reasons for this wide disparity can be attributed to the wide range of facilities that charter schools operate in, which include former Department of Education schools, unused state facilities, private buildings, and new campuses built from scratch.

Any support provided by this committee and the Legislature would go far in addressing the challenge that charter schools have faced in regards to facilities funding. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
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Corey Rosenlee  
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Vice President  
Logan Okita  
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Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
LOWER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

RE: HB 246 - RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 2019

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports HB 246**, relating to charter schools.

Facilities funding is a long-standing issue for charter schools. In Hawai'i, start-up charter schools have paid the costs of their facilities from operational funds. In 2013, however, lawmakers authorized the Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission to request facilities funding as part of its annual budget request. Later, in 2015, legislators called for a working group to establish a framework for providing facilities funding and support for public charter school facilities with adequate prioritization, oversight, and accountability.

Today, amounts received by charter schools fail to keep pace with the cost of providing and quality instruction and maintaining adequate facilities. Charter schools receive \$7,359 per-pupil, most of which is disbursed toward operational expenses, often leaving charters to rely on private donations to fund facilities and rent. Charter schools' per-pupil operating funds cover items like salaries, collective bargaining costs, curricula, school supplies, equipment, and utilities, but do not encompass the facilities and maintenance costs that comprise approximately 10 percent of charter school budgets, according to the Hawai'i Public Charter Schools Network.

Poorly funded charter schools are sometimes forced to hold classes in unstable temporary structures to the detriment of their students' learning and safety. **Accordingly, we urge the committee to approve additional state funds for the repair, maintenance, acquisition, and rental of charter school facilities.** We also encourage your committee to consider ways of improving charter

school facilities funding over the long-term, rather than through one-year legislative add-ons, to ensure that our state's charter school students have the opportunity to receive instruction in 21<sup>st</sup> Century facilities that prepare them for today's cutting-edge workplace.

To provide charter schools with the funds they need for their students to succeed, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 8:24:34 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Susan Osborne	Kua O Ka La NCPCS	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha

Research clearly shows the relationship between the quality of facilities and the academic success of students. Our Charter Schools are public schools and our public school students deserve and need quality facilities. Many of the schools are in great need of this funding support.

Kua O Ka La Charter School lost its campus to lava this past year and there is no mechanism for funding a new campus.

We deeply appreciate your consideration of this important bill.

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 10:53:00 AM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Taffi Wise	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 11:43:14 AM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Camille Rockett	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 11:36:43 AM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kahele Nahale-a	Laupahoehoe Community PCS	Support	No

Comments:



**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 12:00:34 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Nancy Levenson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

# Strong Support for HB 246

## House Committee on Lower and Higher Education

January 30, 2019 ☒ 2:15pm

Hawai'i State Capitol ☒ Conference Room 309

To: Honorable Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair and  
Honorable Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair  
Honorable Committee Members: Rep. Lynn DeCoite, Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson,  
Rep. Dale T. Kobayashi, Rep. Takashi Ohno, Rep. Sean Quinlan, Rep. David a.  
Tarnas, Rep. James Kunane Tokioka, Rep. Val Okimoto

From: Angelique K. Solomon  
Parent, Citizen and Advocate for Hawaii Public Charter Schools  
1238A Halona Place Honolulu, HI 96817  
808-542-4197

Dear Honorable Rep. Woodson Chair; Honorable Rep. Perruso, Vice Chair; and Honorable Committee Members:

My name is Angie Solomon. My daughter currently attends Voyager Public Charter. As a parent I only want the best for my children. As the first person in my family to attend college and complete a master's degree, I know first hand the importance of education and how it can impact the economic trajectory for low-income families providing the opportunity to crush the cycle of poverty, but it starts with the opportunity to quality, innovative, responsive public education that allows parents, teachers, and administrators to work collaboratively to ensure a better future for our keiki and I strongly believe the Hawaii's public charter schools provide that platform.

I strongly support HB 246 providing \$11,160,000 for fiscal year 2019-2020 and same sum as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 to the State Public Charter School Commission to allocate to charter schools for rent/lease, design, planning, construction, repair, and maintenance of public charter school facilities.

As a tax paying Native Hawaiian resident of Hawaii, I made the deliberate decision to enroll my daughter in a public charter school because I wanted to be an active stakeholder with input and decision making abilities, but also to be accountable for the education of my daughter. I enjoy being involved in the day-to-day goings on of school life and the opportunity to support our teachers, staff, and administration, yet also mindful that the State of Hawaii has failed in providing equity funding to our charter schools while treating DOE and charters unequally.

Thank your very much for hearing this bill. By supporting its passage, you and I are working toward a better educational future for our keiki and ensuring fiscal support for Hawaii's public charter schools.

Sincerely,

Angie Solomon

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 12:25:31 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Brandon Keoni Bunag	Halau Ku Mana Public Charter School	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 12:29:58 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Caitlin Engelhard	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My son attends a charter school and this increased funding for the facilities would allow the school to make significant improvements to the physical facilities, which are much needed. I am in support of this bill.

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 12:37:53 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Janlyn Ryusaki-Phillips	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill! This will help all charter schools with the bottom line!

Thank you, Janlyn

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 12:41:25 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Bianca Matthews	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 1:08:47 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jessell Tanaka	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 2:01:07 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Charlene Hoe	Ka Huli o Haloa	Support	No

Comments:



**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 2:12:01 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Gene Zarro	South Maui Learning Ohana, inc.	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I stand in strong support of this bill. It is a long time coming. As a founding organization of Kihei Charter School much of what we would like to provide to our students goes undone because of the financial burden of facilities cost. Hawaii's Public Charter Schools need some relief here in this area.

Aloha

Gene Zarro, CEO, South Maui Learning Ohana

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 2:14:48 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Steven Sullivan	KANAKA PCS	Oppose	No

Comments:

**LATE**



**HB246**  
**RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS**  
House Committee on Lower & Higher Education

January 31, 2019

2:15 p.m.

Room 309

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment Committee will recommend that the Board of Trustees **SUPPORT** HB246, which would provide funding to the State Public Charter School Commission to allocate to state public charter schools for infrastructure costs, rental or lease of facilities, and repair and maintenance of network infrastructure, as determined by the Commission. **This bill would help alleviate the unique financial burdens borne by start-up public charter schools in meeting their basic facilities needs.**

Hawai‘i’s public charter schools are indeed deserving of equity, and have already demonstrated their potential for innovation and excellence notwithstanding their unique financial challenges. Most recently, some public charter schools have outperformed the state average in areas such as on-time graduation rates, college matriculation rates, and reduced chronic absenteeism, as reflected in the latest Strive HI SY 2017-2018 performance scores; lessons learned in such charter schools can benefit students and schools throughout our public education system. As a testament to Hawai‘i’s charter schools’ success, on December 6, 2016, the BOE-approved updated State Education Strategic Plan for 2017-2020 describes “the shared objectives for equity and excellence for every child across Hawai‘i’s nearly 300 public schools, including our public charter schools and Hawaiian language medium schools”; the Plan also includes the objective that “Hawai‘i public schools will foster innovation and the expansion of existing public school ‘Bright Spots,’ which includes learning from charter schools that were established as innovation labs” (emphasis added).

Unfortunately, although Hawai‘i’s public charter schools continue to demonstrate their distinct value to Hawai‘i’s students, addressing public charter schools’ facilities needs continues to be a critical and longstanding issue in the charter school community. Start-up charter schools in particular must pay for their substantial facilities costs using their already-stretched operational funds. This is a cost that is not borne by conversion charter schools, or schools under the Hawai‘i Department of Education, and that may unfairly impede start-up schools from realizing their full potential for their students and as “innovation labs” for public education as a whole.

Notably, the State Board of Education (BOE) itself has acknowledged the longstanding need to address this funding disparity, and its most recent report to the 2019

Legislature “recommends that the Legislature provide some form of facilities funding to charter schools to address this unmet [facilities funding] need.” The BOE’s report also recognized the importance of our public charter schools as an integral component of our public education strategy.

**To fully realize the potential for innovation in charter schools that may in turn foster greater student success in our public school system as a whole, it is critical that public charter schools receive adequate appropriations for facilities funding.** HB246 will help bring equity to our public charter schools, and address the longstanding problem of funding for charter schools’ facilities.

Therefore, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** HB246. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



**LATE**

## KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

House Committee on Lower & Higher Education

Time: 2:15 p.m.

Date: January 31, 2019

Where: Conference Room 309

### TESTIMONY

By Ka'ano'i Walk  
Kamehameha Schools

#### RE: **HB 246, Relating to Charter Schools**

E ka Luna Ho'omalu Woodson, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalu Hashem, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalu Perruso, a me nā Lālā o ke Kōmike Ho'ona'auao Ha'aha'a, Ki'eki'e, a me ke Kulanui o ka Hale o nā Lunamaka'āinana, aloha! My name is Ka'ano'i Walk, the Senior Policy Analyst for Kamehameha Schools.

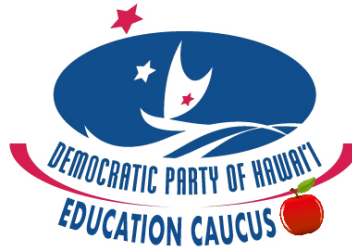
HB 246, relating to charter schools, provides funding for rental or lease of facilities under legislative appropriations and bond authorizations to the State Public Charter School Commission for the design, planning, construction, repair, and maintenance of public charter school improvements. This measure also appropriates general funds for infrastructure costs, rental or lease assistance, and the repair and maintenance of network infrastructure for charter schools. We are writing in **support** of this measure.

Kamehameha Schools advocates for and supports the achievement of Hawai'i's Native Hawaiian public school students. As such, we have been a collaborator with the Hawai'i public charter schools for over a decade. Through our work with Hawaiian-focused public charter schools, we hope to significantly impact more children and their families through education. We believe that Hawaiian-focused charter schools provide quality educational choices for all families and ultimately enhance both academic achievement and engagement for students. This bill is a great step forward toward achieving necessary and sustainable funding for public charter schools.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an educational organization striving to restore our people through education and advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership.

'A'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia. No task is too large when we all work together! **Please advance this measure.**

**LATE**



## **HOUSE BILL HB 246, RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS**

JANUARY 31, 2019 · HOUSE EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE · CHAIR REP. JUSTIN WOODSON

**POSITION:** Support.

**RATIONALE:** The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus supports HB 246, relating to charter schools, which provides funding for rental or lease of facilities under legislative appropriations and bond authorizations to the State Public Charter School Commission for the design, planning, construction, repair, and maintenance of public charter school improvements.

Public charter schools serve as sources of scholastic innovation. While many charter schools operate in urban areas, others meet the academic needs of remote areas lacking comprehensive public school facilities and programming. Additionally, many charter schools provide immersive instruction in Native Hawaiian culture and language.

Yet, charter schools receive inadequate funding to support student learning. While traditional DOE schools receive \$13,748 per-pupil each year, charter schools receive roughly \$7,500 per-pupil, out of which must be paid operational costs including curricula, salaries, and school supplies, leaving little for facilities, maintenance, and rent. Although the Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission may request facilities funding as part of its annual budget request, amounts received in recent fiscal years have not satisfied the rising cost of providing and maintaining quality

facilities. In turn, charter schools that lack adequate building space are forced to conduct class outdoors, on covered lanais, or in unsafe provisional structures.

To compensate for insufficient facilities funding, charter schools often seek revenue from nongovernmental, nonprofit, and corporate entities. While all charter schools in Hawai'i are required to operate as public schools, forcing charter schools to rely on nongovernmental funding sources increases private involvement in charter school programming, which undermines public accountability of the state's charter school network. Furthermore, reliance on private funding by public charter schools could generate efforts to establish private charter schools and private charter school authorizers in Hawai'i, which would transfer control of public education to private entities and erode available resources for traditional public schools. To maintain the public status of charter schools, then, lawmakers should appropriate no less than \$10 million to HSPCSC to allocate based on need and financial performance.

**LATE**

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 2:41:24 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Valentina Kanahale	Kula Aupuni Niihau A Kahelelani Aloha (KANAKA)PCS	Support	No

Comments:



**LATE**

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 2:43:36 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Hedy L Sullivan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**LATE**

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 2:49:07 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
John Thatcher	Connections PCS	Support	No

Comments:

**LATE**

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 3:13:56 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kalima Cayir	Volcano School of Arts & Sciences	Oppose	No

Comments:

**LATE**

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 3:53:21 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jeffrey Mermel	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a homeowner, tax payer and someone who votes in every election, **I strongly SUPPORT this bill.**

Our two children are graduates of public education here in Hawaii and I am a strong supporter of public charter schools (PCS). The PCS here in Volcano was founded 18 years ago and is fully re-accredited with waiting lists for most classes...However, it's old facilities are sorely in need of more maintenance and repair.

It's a shame that funding for those repairs must come out of the per pupil funding...

It's really about time that more DIRECT FUNDING for maintainance and repair come out of the legislature to the Public Charter Schools, just like it does to DOE schools.

**LATE**

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 6:55:56 AM  
Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Denise Espania	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support equitable funding for all our children in Hawaii.

# Late Testimony

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 10:20:40 AM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kalamakahi Crabbe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am Kalamakahi Crabbe in support for HB246 because I am a student attending a public charter school (SEEQS). We Have a very small budget for our school and now sharing a campus with Kamuki High school. We have to tents as class rooms that when rain falls the class floods, when the sun is out our tent becomes a greenhouse. We also have some holes in our roof. But we would just like to please ask for just a little bit more funding so we could have a safer and healither learning enviornment. Mahalo! And thank you for your time.

Sincerly,

Kalamakahi Crabbe

# Late Testimony

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 10:26:32 AM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Shane Albritton	Individual	Support	Yes

**Comments:**

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chairs Hashem and Perruso, and Committee Members,

My name is Shane Albritton and I'm a teacher at SEEQS Public Charter School in Kaimuki.

I'm writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB246.

At SEEQS, we hold five classes a day in large tents. Because charter schools don't receive facilities funding, many charter schools like SEEQS hold classes in tents, in Matson containers, or even under tarps.

As a charter school community, we feel that this situation is no longer safe or conducive to learning. The tents are hot and loud, but most importantly, they cannot be locked down.

In the event of a lockdown, or God forbid a school shooting, our students would have to run across campus to a secure building.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this serious issue.

Late  
Testimony

**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 10:30:21 AM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Piper	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support if this bill because right now my charter school class room is a tent and with the rain the floors are flooding.



**HB-246**

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 12:04:05 PM

Testimony for LHE on 1/31/2019 2:15:00 PM

**Late  
Testimony**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Steve Hirakami	HAASPCS	Support	No

**Comments:**

I strongly support this measure. We have been patiently waiting for some support for our children in charter schools to finally receive the facilities they deserve to learn in. This will go a long way towards improvement in their academic progress. You will see measureable gains in their academic performance. Thank you.