



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

Date: 02/26/2020
Time: 02:00 PM
Location: 211
Committee: Senate Education
Senate Ways and Means

Department: Education

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

Title of Bill: SB 0035, SD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes a safe space program within alternative learning centers in the department of education to support students by providing twenty-four hours per day seven days per week emergency crisis services. Makes an appropriation. (SD1)

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of SB 0035, SD1, requiring the establishment of a safe space program within alternative learning in the Department to support students by providing twenty-four hours per day seven days per week emergency crisis services, and respectfully offers the following comments.

The Department is committed to providing alternative learning programs for students who have not been successful in a traditional learning environment. Alternative learning centers are Department programs and typically provide support services to students placed in the program during the school day. The intent of SB 0035, SD1 to provide twenty-four hours per day seven days per week emergency crisis services to alternative learning program students in the event that they need a safe space would provide a haven for our most vulnerable students. Twenty-four hour per day seven days per week crisis emergency service is beyond the skill and expertise of educators and we respectfully request that an agency with knowledge and experience to establish a safe space program be assigned this responsibility.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 0035, SD1.

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.

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 10:18:39 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ann Mahi	Testifying for Hawaii Dept of Education	Support	No

Comments:

As the Complex Area Superintendent of the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex Area, I am in support of SB 35. The safe space program within the Alternative Learning Centers (ALC) would offer access to students who are alienated due to issues and conditions they are experiencing in their lives. The ALC administrators, teachers, counselors and behavioral health specialists are well prepared to identify the issues and if needed to connect the children to services through other agencies and community organizations. There will need to be a collaborative partnership with the Department of Human Services to create the organizational infrastructure and the identification of support options for the safe places program. This would also include a strong outreach support effort for non school hours to ensure that any child in crisis has a place to go and someone who they can trust to help them through the challenges they are facing. Thank you for allowing input to this bill. It is making the invisible, silent cries of the children who are hurt, more visible and allowing positive changes to happen for them.

February 26, 2020

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair, Education Committee
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair, Ways and Means Committee
Senators Donna Mercado Kim and Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chairs

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB35 SD1: RELATING TO EDUCATION

Submitted by: Disa Hauge, Principal, Wai'anae High School

Aloha Honorable Senators Kidani, Dela Cruz, Kim, Keith-Agaran and Committee members:

I am Disa Hauge, principal of Wai'anae High, and I am writing to express whole-hearted support for SB35 SD1: Relating to Education.

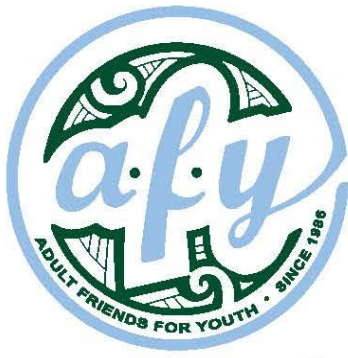
As a lifelong resident of the Wai'anae Coast, I want you to know that I believe in all of our kids. None of them are throw-away kids and all deserve a quality education. During the six years I have been here at Wai'anae High, we have worked hard to implement an MTSS system of social-emotional supports for all kids which includes mental health services through the Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center on campus, alternative programming to meet kids' needs, and a contract with Adult Friends for Youth to provide intensive support to the most at-risk kids.

Between 2015 and 2019, annual discipline offense cases decreased from 3,454 to 971, while suspension days decreased from 437 to 180. In 2013, our graduation rate was 69.6%; by 2019, it had risen to 82.7%.

Yet, there remain students beyond our reach. These students could be protected by CWS but refuse to disclose their true situations and so suffer from homelessness, depression, and failure. I can name bright students who would merit college scholarships if they stayed in school, but are homeless and selling drugs to survive because of conflict and mental health issues in their homes that caused them to be kicked out by their parent. These kids are likely to end up costing taxpayers in welfare and prison costs instead but it does not have to be that way. We can make a difference in their lives if we can intercede.

Safe spaces within alternative learning centers can provide temporary shelter, emergency mental health and other crisis services to these youth in order to ameliorate outside factors that negatively impact students' ability to stay safe and in school such as violence from a mom's boyfriend, threats from a mentally ill uncle who is in the house, molestation in the home, and more. It is heartbreaking when kids share their stories, especially the ones whose significant family members are lost to drugs or have passed away, leaving them alone to fend for themselves. We have to be there for these kids. They have a right to have a chance in life.

Thank you for your consideration of SB35.



Adult Friends for Youth

LATE

Testimony on SB35 SD1 Relating to Education

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

Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Submitted by: Deborah L.K. Spencer-Chun, M.S.W.
President and CEO of Adult Friends for Youth

Chairs Kidani and Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Mercado Kim and Keith-Agaran, Members of the Committees:

I support SB35, SD1 relating to Education.

Adult Friends for Youth's (AFY) mission is "Redirecting lives to stop violence in order to strengthen family and community safety, while promoting well-being for all youth so that they can reach their full potential." In our capacity we have had the opportunity to serve some of the highest risk youth in our communities but who are also some of the brightest young people we have ever met. The difference between them and others not at high risk are their circumstances which include but not limited to: exposure to violence, drugs, incarcerated parents as well as siblings, living in distressed neighborhoods, less opportunities and in many cases lack of proper guidance and love.

For the past 34 years, AFY has provided high-risk youth with Redirectional Therapeutic Counseling services on and off Hawaii public school campuses. We are not your typical nine to five program because we are well aware of the fact that many of our youth engage in violence and often high-risk behaviors at all hours. Many youths have arguments with parents and/or guardians, and runaway to get away from the situation. Some argue with their boyfriend/girlfriend and the situation gets very volatile. Others have fights with other youth in and out of their communities. Over the years, AFY Staff have responded at all hours of the night and morning to all of these situations. In some cases, it may take days to resolve. In other cases, they simply need a safe space to calm down and separate themselves from the situation.

For these reasons, AFY advocates for a safe space for these youth to be able to have someone to talk to at all hours when the need arises. For AFY, this bill is a logical step in the right direction. We are not talking about a residential place, but a safe space where our youth can have a "break time" or respite to cool down.

These safe spaces could also be the first step for our youth to get any type of services they may need, short or long term.

Thank you for your time.

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 9:16:16 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Puanani Wilhelm	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 10:43:44 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ami Akeo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support of SB35 SD1. I have worked with youth for over 20 years and see this as a step in the right direction. Our youth need safe spaces to regroup and refocus! The trauma that they sometimes face is beyond their control. I have witnessed the impact of trauma on our youth first hand and often wondered what it would be like for them to have a place to go to once our day has ended, free from distractions and abuse. If we want to break the cycle of abuse and poverty, it starts with investing in our youth. It starts with protecting them and demonstrating through our actions that we believe all youth should have the support they need at **all** times.

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 11:08:07 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
jason roberts	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha my name is Jason Roberts and I am the District Educational Specialist for Project Hi AWARE with the Department of Education in the Nanakuli-Waianae Complex Area. The Project Hi AWARE grant provides support to address trauma and create systems of support for students who face challenges that impede learning. This testimony is supported by our Complex Area Superintendant, Ann Mahi and the Nanakuli-Waianae complex staff. We have made every effort to make our schools "safe places" but our students do not live at school. The establishment of community "safe places" would broaden the scope of care for all Nanakuli-Waianae children to help connect them with services during times of crisis.

The driving force behind this initiative comes directly from our students at Papahana o Kaiona program, an alternative learning setting at Wai'anae High School. These students previously faced significant challenges attending school and have been able to be successful both academically and emotionally. These students know first hand about the trauma and danger that is part of life in a community that is defined by poverty and addiction. Consequently, they also know that sometimes just having somewhere safe to go can literally save lives.

These "Safe Places" could be established based upon a national model of "Safe Places" for minors in communities and provide access to public and private organizations that can help a child deal with an endangering situation.

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 11:47:07 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Keith Cruce	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support the testimony because there are some kids out there that need some place to stay. There are some kids that live in tents and are wishing to play games or do something fun with other people because they have no one to play with. Those kids also wish they could have a good meal like regular people. When I was younger, I had similar experiences of being homeless and not eating, and there are still kids experiencing this today. If I had a place like this, I would have gone to have someone to talk to so that I did not feel lonely and left out.

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 11:54:29 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Feavai Faapouli	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill because there are many teens who feel insecure within our community. I can't say that drug abuse will stop, neither will sexual abuse, but I believe this would be a perfect place for anyone who is in a difficult situation, such as that, because they would have someone to talk to. This bill could make a difference within these communities and by supporting this bill, we could change a life!

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 11:57:17 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christian Lapinig-Keolanui	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this testimony because I feel that if there is a safe program for kids it would decrease the violence in our community. It would also help our community by making sure the kids have people to talk to if they can't talk to their parent. It would also help the kids get the support/safe structure they need. If I had things going on in life and I needed someone to talk to, I would want somewhere to go like a safe program. Personally, I would go myself.

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 12:22:08 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
pualani basilio-moore	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill because there is a lot of kids in the community who feel unsafe!! I feel like a lot of the kids in our community needs it because sometimes the kids get into fights with their parents and they need a place to stay so the safe house would be the right thing to do for our community. Another reason why we should have the safe house is because theres a lot of bad things happening in the streets such as people getting raped or kidnapped. Having a safe place to go means they don't need to experience it by themselves. In my opinion, I would go there if I felt like I wasn't safe because I could talk to someone or if people in there have the same personal problem as me I know that I am not alone solving my problems.

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 12:49:26 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Eloise Zabala	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill because I've known a lot of kids that struggle at home with financial problems either because their parents do not have the skills for a good paying job or their parents might hurt them physically, mentally, and/or emotionally. Yes, I know we may have school and yes, that is a good, safe, and secure place for us to go during the day, but what happens to us after school? Where is our safe place supposed to be now? What are we supposed to do? Who can we go to? I believe that if we create a 24 hour/7 days a week safe house for any teenager and kids that need someone that it will benefit us all. Personally, I'd go to this safe house because when I was about 10 years old we just moved to Waianae from Las Vegas. My mom and dad were arguing about something and I ended up waking up crying as I witnessed my dad kick my mom out. I tried to stop him, but he just ended up getting really mad at me. I've never seen him that mad and he ended up kicking me out too. I had nothing but my phone and the clothes on my back. I tried calling my mom but she did not answer so I just sat there with nowhere to go and no one to call. I felt so alone and so scared. But, if at that moment there was a safe house maybe that night I wouldn't have felt so unsafe, scared, or alone because I would have known I had somewhere to go and someone who cared.

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 12:54:12 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Desire DeSoto	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

My name is Desiré De Soto, Ph.D., and I currently serve as the school counselor for the Papahana' o Kaiona Alternative Learning Program (POK) in the Wai'anae moku.

The vast majority of students in our program are living in a state of crisis. They are doing the best they can with what they have, but need more support. During the school day, our alternative learning program does its best to physically, mentally, and emotionally support our students who are at high-risk of dropping out of high school. By helping students cope with difficult situations and building relationships with positive adults and community partners, we aspire to instill hope and optimism for a brighter future for themselves and their families. However, this is far from enough as our 'opio spend more time away from us than they do with us.

Monday mornings and the day after school breaks can be challenging when working with high-risk populations. Safe spaces within alternative learning centers can provide temporary shelter, emergency mental health, and other crisis services to youth to help mitigate the factors outside of school that are negatively impacting students' physical and emotional well-being.

It is heartbreaking when kids share their stories, especially ones whose family members are lost to drugs or have passed away, leaving them alone to fend for themselves. We have to be there for these kids. They have a right to have a chance in a building a healthy and happy life for themselves and future generations.

A sincere mahalo to you all for your thoughtful consideration of SB35.

Honorable Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz And Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran,

In regards to SB35 SD1, today, February 26, 2020 at 2:00pm,

My name is Isabella Walker, and I am a Junior at the University of Hawaii's Myron, B.

Thompson School of Social Work. I am here to testify on SB35 SD1 relating to Education.

I firmly support SB35 SD1. I support this bill because as a prospective social worker I am all too familiar with aspects outside of the classroom that effect the student's ability to function in class.

Some children come from families where school can be an escape from the realities they may face at home. A child who comes to school from a home that is not safe, i.e. abuse, drugs, violence, crime, and poverty etc, should have a safe place they can turn to in times of need.

These safe spaces would be beneficial for children to get the help they deserve and prevent potential avoidable trauma that may come from home. It is primitive to aid children in having the best childhood they can have in order to become successful adults not scarred by trauma.

I thank you senators, and members of this chamber for your time and taking into consideration why SB35 SD1 would be absolutely beneficial to the keiki of Hawaii.

Isabella Walker

Junior at UH Manoa, Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work

ijwalker@hawaii.edu

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 1:25:40 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

LATE

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2020 12:20:16 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sasha Fernandes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-35-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2020 9:11:16 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/26/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jennifer Azuma Chrupalyk	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I don't know what kind of people you have who are identifying the problems, but the problems have not changed in over 100 years in Hawai'i. Do you need help identifying the solution? I would gladly sit with all of your committees to open this discussion, identify solutions and make them work.

Many families that would need services to help the children are labeled as "at-risk" families. This means that the families are experiencing barriers to substantial survival. The state does NOT need to open new departments in which to help take children away from their parents. The State of Hawai'i needs to fix the roots problems in our communities.

The reason we have so many "at-risk" families is because the cost of living are so high, and wages are comparable to indenture servitude. Perhaps when you fix the Medquest insurance issues, actually pay doctors for their services, bring dental health to the platform which will alleviate other health problems in the future, and fix that stupid \$13/hour wage increase to an amount that actually reflects our costs of living in Hawai'i - we will get somewhere. But opening new positions in a job market that cannot even handle the current situation - while requiring people to take 4 years of school to do a hal-assed job, is redundant and a waste of State money.

We need for you to actually fix the root problems. There are far too many band-aids in Hawai'i that are not stopping the bleeding of people's hearts, minds and existence. The State of Hawai'i is creating hardships, then inventing band-aids. This is detrimental to our citizens and presents a horrible display of poor governance. Let's address the root problems and stop our families from hurting, as opposed to offering a band-aid from a company that nobody trusts [the State of Hawai'i].