



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/15/2024

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 2730 RELATING TO BULLYING.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the department of education to create and implement anti-bullying policies. Outlines the requirements for each institution's policy and specifies reporting, investigation, and appeals procedures involving incidents of bullying. Appropriates funds for anti-bullying and suicide prevention efforts in the public schools.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully provides comments for HB 2730.

The safety, social-emotional health, and well-being of our students continue to be a top priority for the Department. The Department is committed to fostering culturally responsive, supportive, and inclusive learning environments, which include anti-bullying policies and ongoing bullying prevention efforts.

The Department's approach to this effort is guided by explicit discipline and bullying policies outlined in Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) Chapter 19, Implementation Guidelines, HAR Chapter 89, and the Civil Rights Policy. These rules and procedures cover various aspects, including definitions, reporting incidents, investigations, disciplinary actions, appeals process, and parent notifications regarding incidents of bullying, harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. Supporting these efforts are the Hawaii Board of Education (BOE) policies, including BOE Policy 305-10 Anti-Harassment, Anti-Bullying, and Anti-Discrimination Against Students By

Employees, as well as BOE Policy 101-1 Student Code of Conduct, emphasizing the expectation for students to contribute to a safe school environment free from fear.

To ensure a consistent understanding, the Department conducts annual notification for all employees regarding HAR Chapter 19, HAR Chapter 89, and the Civil Rights Policy and Complaint Procedure for Student(s) Complaints Against Adult(s). In addition the Department provides training for teachers, administrators, and other school staff in bully-prevention areas such as Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), Trauma-Informed Care, Suicide Prevention to help staff recognize and respond effectively to bullying behaviors. Through a vetted provider, the Mental Health America of Hawaii annually offers suicide and bullying prevention training to all staff.

At the beginning of each school year and during student enrollment, schools provide students with an opening school packet containing crucial information, including the student bill of rights, a parent letter defining bullying and retaliation, descriptions of behavioral offenses, and procedures for filing complaints regarding discrimination, bullying, and harassment. All of these resources, policies and procedures are available to parents, students, and staff on the Department website yearlong.

Moreover, the Department has established an anonymous bullying reporting application, "Speak Now" that allows students and their parents to instantly send information about bullying incidents to school officials through electronic devices. Upon receipt of the submitted report, the school administrator initiates a review of the alleged incident and implements procedures outlined in HAR Chapter 19 accordingly.

To raise awareness about bullying, promote empathy and respect among students, and teach conflict resolution skills, schools implement preventative programs including but not limited to Social-Emotional Learning Programs, Character Education Programs, Trauma-Informed Care Instruction, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support, and Restorative Practices.

Although the Department has anti-bullying and preventative measures in place, it is open to a general anti-bullying policy outlined in statute, with specific details left to Hawaii Administrative Rules. To that end, the Department is open to having a continued dialogue with the legislature on what an anti-bullying policy in statute could look like that balances statutory requirements and administrative flexibility.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2730.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2024**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:
H.B. NO. 2730, RELATING TO BULLYING.

BEFORE THE:
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

DATE: Thursday, February 15, 2024 **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 309 and Videoconference

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Anne T. Horiuchi, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the following comments.

Section 2 of this bill adds a new part to chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), the chapter regarding the Department of Education (DOE), to require the DOE to create and implement anti-bullying policies, outline the requirements for each educational institution's policy, and specify reporting, investigation, and appeals procedures involving incidents of bullying. Additionally, the bill appropriates funds for anti-bullying and suicide prevention efforts in the public schools.

References to chapter 489, HRS

We recommend deleting all references to chapter 489, HRS, from the bill. First, the bill contains multiple references to chapter 489, HRS, which is the chapter relating to "Discrimination in Public Accommodations." In particular, the bill references procedures and remedies under chapter 489. It is possibly misleading for the new part of chapter 302A, HRS, to refer to chapter 489, HRS, because a public school is not a "place of public accommodation" as defined by section 489-2, HRS. A "place of public accommodation" is meant to refer to a business or accommodation whose "goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations are extended, offered, sold, or otherwise made available to the general public as customers, clients or visitors." There are currently no references to chapter 489 in chapter 302A, HRS, or in part 1,

"Public Schools," of subtitle 2 of title 8, Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR). Chapter 489, HRS, does not appear to be applicable to the provisions of this bill.

Second, new section 302A-C(c), on page 10, lines 5-8, states: "When a written request for an appeal for a secondary investigation is submitted, the [DOE] shall inform the party about their ability to seek further redress under chapter 489." The Department is concerned that this could also be construed as requiring the DOE to engage in the unauthorized practice of law, because the DOE would be providing advice regarding potential legal remedies. The Department recommends that new section 302A-C(c) be removed from the bill.

Third, section 14 of article III of the Hawaii Constitution provides, in relevant part, that "Each law shall embrace but one subject, which shall be expressed in its title." The one subject expressed in this bill's title is "bullying." The references to chapter 489, HRS, may go beyond the scope of the single subject expressed in the bill's title and may violate the single subject requirement of section 14 of article III of the Hawaii Constitution. For this bill to comply with the single subject requirement, the Department recommends removing the references to chapter 489, HRS.

Other Suggested Revisions

- New section 302A-C is entitled, "Secondary investigation; appeal," page 9, line 8, through page 10, line 11, but the "appeal" is not a request by a dissatisfied party to have a higher-level authority review the sufficiency of the initial investigation. Instead, this provision simply allows a dissatisfied party to immediately invalidate the outcome of the initial investigation, without having to point to any deficiency in the initial investigation, and without the higher-level authority first finding that there was a deficiency in the initial investigation. If the second investigation finds against the non-appealing party, the non-appealing party is not permitted its own appeal of the investigation. Essentially, this allows the parties to engage in forum-shopping and leads to inequality in due process protections. The Department recommends revising section 302A-C to create an appeals procedure that requires a

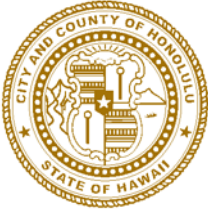
- dissatisfied party to allege a deficiency in the initial investigation, and requires a finding of a deficiency by a higher-level authority, prior to any secondary investigation being conducted.
- New section 302A-E tasks the DOE with establishing "an annual bullying prevention program for students, which for each educational institution, shall align with established health-education standards[.]" Page 11, lines 8-11. New section 302A-A defines "educational institution" as including public charter schools. Page 4, lines 12-14. The DOE, however, does not have authority over charter schools. See chapter 302D, HRS. Because "department school" is already defined in section 302A-101 and does not include charter schools, the Department recommends removing the definition of "educational institution" on page 4, lines 12-14, and replacing any references to "educational institution" with "department school." If it is the Legislature's intent to make this bill applicable to charter schools, the Department suggests adding similar content to chapter 302D, HRS.
 - To correctly refer to the designation of the new part being added to chapter 302A, HRS, the Department also recommends replacing "chapter" with "part" on: (1) page 2, line 8; (2) page 5, line 16; (3) page 8, lines 3 and 4; and (4) page 9, line 10.
 - New section 302A-B(e)(3) (page 8, line 17, through page 9, line 4) requires the DOE to make a mandatory bullying and cyberbullying training session for parents and guardians of students that must be completed prior to the first day of the academic year. The Department suggests that the bill be amended to include an enforcement mechanism for the DOE.

Furthermore, the bill's provisions overlap with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. section 794), which covers disability discrimination in schools, and title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. sections 1681-1688) ("Title IX"), which prohibits gender discrimination in schools. The DOE already has

procedures in place pursuant to federal law. For example, Title IX required the DOE to adopt grievance procedures (34 C.F.R. section 106.45); the DOE must adhere to those specific procedures or be found out of compliance by the federal government. Among other things, the Title IX regulations require that the grievance process include an investigation of formal complaints (*id.* at (b)(5)) and an appeals procedure (*id.* at (b)(8)). The bill's requirement of a secondary investigation upon request, and the absence of any bases for appealing a decision, do not comport with the current Title IX regulations. Therefore, passage of this bill conflicts with the DOE's authority under federal law to establish its own grievance procedures for dealing with sex-based discrimination. To provide the DOE with the ability to determine which of its policies or procedures should be maintained to continue compliance with federal law, the Department suggests adding an additional section to the new part to be added to chapter 302A, HRS:

§302A-F Application If this part or any provision of this part conflicts at any time with any federal law, then the federal law shall prevail and this part or the relevant provisions of this part shall become ineffective and invalid. The ineffectiveness or invalidity of this part or any of its provisions shall not affect any other provisions or applications of this part, which shall be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end, the provisions of this part are severable.

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



CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 202
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-3065
TELEPHONE: (808) 768-5010 • FAX: (808) 768-5011

AUGIE TULBA

Councilmember District 9


Waipahū, Iroquois Point, West Loch, 'Ewa Villages and portions of 'Ewa Beach

Telephone: (808) 768-5009

Email: atulba@honolulu.gov

LATE

TO: Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair
House Committee on Education

FROM: Augie Tulba 
Honolulu City Councilmember, District 9

DATE: February 14, 2024

SUBJECT: SUPPORT HB 2730, RELATING TO BULLYING

Aloha! I am writing to express my support of HB 2730, Relating to Bullying. Anti-bullying is an issue near and dear to my heart. For the past 10 years, my family and I have been working to raise awareness about the impact of bullying. My daughter was a victim of bullying, but in 2013, she turned her negative experience into a positive one by starting an anti-bullying nonprofit named B.R.A.V.E., which stands for Be Respectful and Value Everyone, to rally against bullying and promote kindness and respect.

HB 2730 will require the Department of Education to create and implement anti-bullying policies, which will provide a more protective environment for school students. It will also appropriate funds for anti-bullying and suicide prevention efforts in our public schools. All persons deserve to be treated with respect and this bill is a step in the right direction to make that a reality for youth in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify!



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov

LATE

February 15, 2024

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*
Ms. Susan Wood, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Sara Alimoot
Ms. Kathie Awaya
Ms. Virginia Beringer
Ms. Mary Brogan
Ms. Deborah Cheeseman
Ms. Annette Cooper
Ms. Shana Cruz
Mr. Mark Disher
Ms. Mai Hall
Dr. Kurt Humphrey
Ms. Melissa Johnson
Ms. Tina King
Ms. Jennifer Leoiki-Drino
Ms. Dale Matsuura
Ms. Cheryl Matthews
Dr. Paul Meng
Ms. Kiele Pennington
Mr. Christopher Pelayo
Ms. Kau'i Rezentos
Ms. Rosie Rowe
Dr. Scott Shimabukuro
Ms. Debora Uyeda
Mr. Steven Vannatta
Ms. Lisa Vegas
Ms. Jasmine Williams

Ms. Helen Kaniho, *liaison to
the Superintendent*
Ms. Wendy Nakasone-Kalani,
*liaison to the military
community*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Representative Justin H. Woodson
Committee on Education
Hawaii Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 2730 - RELATING TO BULLYING

Dear Representative Woodson and members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, respectfully provides comments on HB 2730 which requires the Department of Education to create and implement anti-bullying policies, specifies reporting, investigation and appeals procedures, and appropriates funds for anti-bullying and suicide prevention efforts in public schools.

SEAC has been engaged for years in finding strategies and supporting policies to both prevent and reduce and prevalence of bullying and cyberbullying given its harmful impact on all students, and especially on vulnerable students, including students with disabilities and LGBTQ youth. We appreciate this Committee's willingness to hear HB 2730 and encourage more dialogue on what more can be done legislatively to reduce and prevent bullying in our public schools. While the proposed bill contains some components of a bullying prevention policy that have recently been added to Chapter 19 administrative rules--such as a procedure for reporting bullying and cyberbullying, a list of consequences and disciplinary procedures in response to bullying, and a procedure for investigating bullying complaints--it does contain some innovative components. These include mandatory training sessions on bullying and cyberbullying for parents and guardians (although SEAC does not that this training can be made mandatory), the right to appeal the results of an investigation (secondary investigation), and the use of alternative discipline which keeps students in school and learning while addressing the root causes of the misbehavior.

One component of bullying prevention that SEAC finds lacking is a mechanism for the reliable and timely reporting of data on the incidence



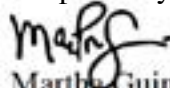
Testimony re: HB 1904, HD 1
February 15, 2024
Page 2

of bullying in our schools to the public. SEAC has recently been unable to secure bullying data specific to students with disabilities--from the Speak Now HIDOE app for student reporting, Chapter 19 documentation of bullying incidence, or the Hawaii Youth Risk Behavior Survey. When Hawaii reports incidences of bullying related to students in protected classes to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), including students with disabilities, it is lag data which doesn't get posted until two or more school years after the incidences occurred. Another issue with this this OCR substantiated data is that the numbers reported are very low compared to the significant numbers of bullying that is self-reported on the Hawaii Youth Risk Behavior Survey (HYRBS) given to Middle and High Schoolers. For example, in the 2021 survey given to middle schoolers, 33% of the students randomly sampled reported that they had been bullied in the past 12 months. While the HYRBS does not currently have a mechanism to determine the status of students with disabilities, we assume that they are being bullied at a higher rate than their non-disabled peers based on national research.

Two other issues of concern to SEAC include: 1) while the 2019 amendments to Chapter 19 created a process for the investigation of bullying, SEAC has received anecdotal reports that principals may be concluding that many of the bullying reports received are merely teasing and not bullying, thereby not prompting interventions; and 2) although there are a number of effective bullying prevention programs at individual schools, there is not a consistent statewide approach to bullying prevention, bullying prevention and timely reporting to the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important issue. SEAC stands ready to be part of the solution, should our assistance be needed.

Respectfully,


Martha Guinan
Chair



February 14, 2024

Hawaii House Committee on Education

Conference Room 309, State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street,
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Education,

I write to you on behalf of GLSEN, the leading national organization on LGBTQI+ issues in K-12 education. GLSEN is committed to ensuring that all youth – including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, nonbinary, Two-Spirit, and intersex youth – have equal opportunities to thrive, grow, and reach their full potential. GLSEN works to build safe and affirming learning environments for LGBTQI+ youth while advancing racial, gender, and disability justice in education settings.

GLSEN supports H.B.2730 and urges the committee to support this effort to ensure safe school environments in Hawaii. GLSEN's [National School Climate Survey \(NSCS\)](#) found that 83% of LGBTQI+ students are victimized at school in the 2021-2022 school year. GLSEN's survey has also consistently found that students identify lower rates of bullying and harassment in schools where there is an anti-bullying policy that enumerates and expressly prohibits bullying and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Enumeration is necessary to protect all students as research has consistently shown that students experience less bullying, feel safer overall, and that teachers are more likely to intervene to prevent incidents of bullying in schools with enumerated policies. When a school has and enforces a comprehensive policy, especially one which also includes procedures for reporting incidents to school authorities, it clarifies the responsibilities of school staff, the rights and remedies available to victimized students, and can send a message that bullying, harassment, and assault are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. According to the NSCS (2021), only 12% of LGBTQI+ students identified that they attended a school with a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy that included specific protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Given the high percentages of LGBTQI+ students who experience harassment at school, and the limited access to key resources and supports, we urge this committee to advance this bill and provide safe learning environments for all students. Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia have passed legislation that specifically prohibits bullying and harassment of students in K-12 schools based on sexual orientation and gender identity. We urge the Hawaii legislature to pass and implement this common-sense, widely adopted policy with all due haste. Should you have any questions about the above information, please feel free to reach out to Rin Alajaji, State and Local Policy Manager, at rin.alajaji@glsen.org

Sincerely,

Brian Dittmeier
Director of Public Policy
GLSEN

HB-2730

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 6:41:40 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/15/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We might have thought these polices already existed but if not, then apparently legislation is needed.

HB-2730

Submitted on: 2/14/2024 12:22:32 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/15/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie Detwiler	Hawaii Federation of Republican Women	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I support HB2730 on anti-bullying and suicide prevention.

I agree that the department of education should continue to promote and implement anti-bullying policies. HB2730 outlines sound policy and specifies reporting, investigation, and appeals procedures involving incidents of bullying.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Detwiler, President

Hawaii Federation of Republican Women

HB-2730

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 5:16:11 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/15/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch	Rainbow Family 808	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rainbow Family 808 strongly supports HB2730. We need to help protect all children. Please pass this bill.

Mike Golojuch, Sr., Secretary/Board Member

HB-2730

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 11:39:39 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/15/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy R Ajimine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please SUPPORT this bill. Many of our children suffer silently or speak up with major repercussions and minimal protection that quite often can result in mental issues or even suicide. Should not be. Please SUPPORT this bill.

HB-2730

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 1:43:29 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/15/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teri Heede	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

NOBODY likes a bully but, not everyone knows how to deal with it.

Let's pass this bill and save some lives.

HB-2730

Submitted on: 2/14/2024 4:02:57 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/15/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vernelle Oku	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

thank you for addressing this issue!

HB-2730

Submitted on: 2/14/2024 10:18:41 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/15/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Troy Apostol	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a former teacher in public, private, and charter schools, I strongly support this bill for the good of the keiki. Bullying can be prfoundly destructive to mind, body, and spirit, and has no place in HI schools.

HB-2730

Submitted on: 2/14/2024 10:30:09 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/15/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Jung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Natalie Jung, I live in Honolulu, and I am writing in support of HB2730, which requires the department of education to create and implement anti-bullying policies.

As a former high-school educator, I have witnessed firsthand the harmful effects of bullying on a student’s mental and physical health: I watched a radiant student lose her self-confidence over a cruel, racist remark made by a peer in the hallway; I sat with a student as she sobbed over a misleading video that spread rapidly throughout the school on Snapchat; I approved the transfer paperwork of a student who felt physically unsafe in our school community. These are, unfortunately, a few of many examples that are all too common throughout the country.

Bullying can leave lasting scars, both seen and unseen, and cause irreparable harm to students’ self-esteem, sense of safety, and academic success. HB2730 aims not only to prevent the act of bullying in the first place but also to minimize the extent of harm to both the aggressor and the victim by mandating that school policies include alternative discipline approaches in their list of consequences.

Traditional consequences such as detention and out-of-school suspension often ignore the root causes of the aggressor’s actions and exacerbate existing disparities by removing them from the learning environment and triggering feelings of isolation and shame. In contrast, the efficacy of alternative disciplinary approaches such as restorative conversations and counseling are well documented. In addition to reducing the disproportionate punishment of minority students, they help address the root causes of bullying and promote long-term positive behavior change.

Please support this measure, which promotes the safety, well-being and success of all students in our schools.

Mahalo,

Natalie Jung

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair
House Committee on Education (EDN)

HB 2730

Thursday, February 15, 2024
02:00 pm and VIA Videoconference
Conference Room 309
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha, my name is Megan Mauricio. I am currently a student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, I am a graduate student who is getting her master's degree at the Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health.

My position on the measure, I am testifying in favor of HB 2730. I find that this bill very useful in establishing and implementing bullying policies in institutions like public schools.

I take this position because I have been a recipient of bullying, and it was an experience that I will never forget. I will spare you the details, but in some of my personal experiences, bullying was not taken seriously, it was nothing more than a slap on the wrist for the bully and then they would go on to the next victim. I would sit by myself at lunch while people threw bread or food at me, people stole my personal belongings and I did not have many friends in school, so finding my place in middle school was not an easy task. If there were policies in the school system that were more serious at that time, I believe that my experience would have been better, and I wouldn't felt so displaced in an already confusing time.

Currently, 54% of Hawaii public middle school students and 39% of high school students say bullying is a major problem in schools, according to a newly released statewide survey. (Goldstein 2024) Bullying is far worse than it was years ago, with the extension of bullying on the internet (i.e. social media platforms). It is said that 81% of young people think that bullying online is easier to get away with than bullying in person. (Teen Link Hawaii).

I believe that implementing policies in schools will benefit those who need extra protection and support. If students are willing to be open about their experiences of being bullied, the proper support and individuals will be able to help them in times of need. I am in favor of bill HB 2730.

Thank you for your time,

Megan Mauricio

University of Hawaii at Manoa, BSW, MSW Candidate
Email: mmaurici@hawaii.edu

CHAIR OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE

H.B. N.O. 2730
February 14, 2024

IN SUPPORT

Aloha, my name is Priscilla Kang, and I will be graduating from UH Manoa with my Master's degree in Social Work this spring, specializing in behavioral mental health. I am testifying in favor of H.B. N.O. 2730.

As a former educator and current clinical social worker in training, I am aware of the detrimental effect of bullying and cyberbullying on adolescent (and adult) mental health. Emotional abuse in childhood and adolescence can have negative consequences that extend well into adulthood including the development of anxiety and mood disorders, self-harming behaviors, somatic symptoms, and impaired brain function. Between the hours of 8am and 3pm, each child regardless of background, housing situation, or home life, is given the opportunity to connect with the community, have a warm meal, and be exposed to skills and ideas that have the potential to shape their future. These sacred hours should not be compromised for any child by abusive actions from students (and teachers). Furthermore, we must be vigilant as the development of technology introduces newer and crueler methods of bullying, including AI deep-fake pornography, which is already being used by children to bully peers. It is our responsibility to protect our youth by developing and implementing prevention and intervention protocols around this important issue.

Beyond teaching students math, science, and language, I believe the single most impactful thing a school can do is to guide a child to becoming a positive member of society who is able to communicate appropriately with other human beings. Children spend more time in school with their peers and teachers than they do with their parents. This means that the school system has just as big a responsibility in imparting positive values as parents and families do. A comprehensive anti-bullying program would clearly communicate that we as a society take mental health and abuse seriously, and that we will not tolerate abusive behavior in our schools.

Thank you,

Priscilla Kang
kangp@hawaii.edu

HB-2730

Submitted on: 2/14/2024 12:56:48 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/15/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cory Asuncion	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. I one almost committed suicide in my teens because I was bullied in high school, they took my lunch, they took my money, they took my snacks, they even took my Walkman. I'm only 5'2" at 54 years old, imagine 15 years old I was tiny boy, I was pushed around,slapped, threaten, and forced to do things in didn't wanto. It's was so bad I dropped out of high school as a sophomore and never returned. The very ones who bullied me used to come to my tattoo shop to get tattoos when I owned Sudden Rush Tattoo in waipahu.Yes it was hard but now they played friendly when I almost took my life because of their actions. 😞

HB-2730

Submitted on: 2/14/2024 1:12:36 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/15/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corinne Solomon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2730.

Protecting our keiki from bullying should be a top priority.

Mahalo

LATE

HB-2730

Submitted on: 2/14/2024 4:51:43 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/15/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
AA Relm Park	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

H.B. NO 2730

Date: Thursday, February 15, 2024

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: 309 via video conference

Dear Representatives and Committee Members,

My name is AA Relm Park. I am a student representative from the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health. I am in support of the H.B. NO 2730 bill requiring the Department of Education to create and implement anti-bullying policies and for appropriate funds for anti-bullying and suicide prevention efforts in public schools.

I strongly support this bill because school bullying is a major risk for students' emotional health and their well-being (Cowie & Myers, 2017). According to Helen Cowie and Carrie-Anne Myers (2017), every day at schoolyards and classrooms, thousands of children suffer from bullying from their peers. Bullying will cause a domino effect on students’ physical and mental health, attendance, and social relationships. Students’ mental health may lead to severe and long-lasting effects. Students SHOULD NOT have to wake up in the morning and worry or fear about going to school. Nowadays, bullying may continue due to cyberbullying. Bullying may continue at the Department of Education to take steps to help prevent bullying. It should be our due diligence to keep our children safe. According to Hawai‘i News Now (2018), there were 1,284 bullying incidents that happened across 29 public schools in the 2014-2015 school year, but ONLY 113 reports were made. Schools took no action to stop bullying. The H.B. NO 2730 bill will allow more students to come forward when they are being bullied because the students would know they will be safe and protected from the schools. The H.B. NO 2730 bill will help prevent bullying because it would be a requirement for public education to assist and implement anti-bullying policies. It is our responsibility to protect students from this horrific experience and trauma.

In closing, again, I would like to emphasize that I strongly support the HB NO 2730 bill regarding requiring the Department of Education to create and implement anti-bullying policies, and for appropriate funds for anti-bullying and suicide prevention efforts in public schools. We need to take the initiative to prevent bullying at public schools from happening. We believe that your support and influence will be instrumental in advancing this initiative. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

AA Relm Park

Graduate student

LATE

HB-2730

Submitted on: 2/15/2024 11:27:00 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/15/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ralena Alcos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good Afternoon, I am in support of HB2730 for many reasons including those outlined in the bill itself. Bullying in all forms is detrimental to the individual being "attacked" as this is what it actually is. Whether it is Cyberbullying, Verbal bullying, or Physical bullying it all has one purpose and that is to hurt another individual. These acts of bullying have such a great impact on our precious keiki, and youth through High School as who we are trying to protect and those individuals perpetrating these acts to be held accountable. This bill acknowledges an important aspect of communication, healing, accountability, and more importantly what is the root or foundation of an individual to inflict hurt, emotional distress, thoughts of suicide that sometimes lead to death, feeling less than worthy of love and kindness and sometimes forces the individual being attacked to act out in a way that they would not normally respond to a situation and out of their character. With today's daily family struggles of life, the cost of living, 2 parents working or not, home life, peer pressure in school, society, social media, feeling accepted, relationships, the pressures of just being a kid or teen, it all becomes overwhelming and many times there is no life raft or moral compass in sight. I believe there should be many aspects of accountability, the parents, the bully, those witnessing the bullying, teachers, school, friends and the list goes on. I believe statistics are much higher than reported as many students are fearful of reporting it for fear of retaliation. I know there are programs to address bullying which is great however this bill goes beyond that. Reaching a bully at the core of hurting an individual and perhaps seeing another individual as someone who is like oneself wants to feel loved, accepted and most importantly to not end his life. Education and accountability is key as these are all our precious keiki that if we can turn the heart of a bully, continue to teach our keiki and teens about love and kindness, we will have an opportunity to change the environment they grow up in and pay it forward. It's about saving lives, protecting our kids and to stop or majorly limit this type of aggression. Every student should know that God loves them unconditionally, they matter 24/7, Being bullied is not ok and they have access to a solution. Every life is worth saving especially if it was happening to your child.