



SB703
RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING
Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ka Ho‘okolokolo

Pepeluali 17, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Hālāwai Keleka‘a‘ike

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB703, which would require two hours of in-service training on suicide prevention education for all teachers, principals, and counselors each school year.

OHA has long advocated for meaningful policies that can reduce the health inequities of Native Hawaiians. For example, OHA spearheaded the legislative effort to codify “social determinants of health” through Act 155 (Reg. Sess. 2014), and require state agencies to take a holistic and systemic approach to addressing health disparities seen in Native Hawaiian and other communities. Therefore, OHA appreciates the intent of SB703 to address the harms and health issues that may drive young people, including a disproportionate amount of young Native Hawaiians, to suicide and suicide attempts.

Recent data has highlighted the negative impacts of suicide, attempted suicide, and suicidal ideation on the Native Hawaiian community. **Alarmingly, Native Hawaiian youth are substantially more likely to ideate and attempt suicide than their peers.**¹ About 24% of Native Hawaiian females in public high schools have seriously considered attempting suicide, compared to 18.7% of non-Hawaiian females.² Statewide, the percentage of 10th grade Native Hawaiian males that previously attempted suicide (11%) was more than double that of their non-Hawaiian peers (5.2%).³ Anecdotal reports have also suggested an apparent increase in suicide attempts and deaths among Native Hawaiian youth in recent months, possibly influenced by the abrupt lifestyle changes and social isolation brought on by the pandemic. Tragically, suicide and suicide attempts do not just impact the individuals involved, but carry long-lasting consequences for families and the broader community as well.

SB703 may facilitate the implementation of OHA recommendations made over recent years to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians, and that may specifically address the higher incidence of youth suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and suicide deaths within the Native Hawaiian community. For example, in “Haumea: Transforming

¹ Id. at 19-25.

² Id. at 19-20.

³ Id. at 22.

the Health of Native Hawaiian Women and Empowering Wāhine Well-Being,”⁴ OHA recommended specific mental health interventions for our keiki in schools, by: (1) creating and improving mental health screening programs, (2) **addressing self-harm with gender-sensitive and grade-appropriate strategies in public schools**, (3) working with trained professionals in mental and behavioral health fields to ensure appropriate treatment and follow-up, (4) providing assessments of drug alcohol use disorders among adolescents, and (5) improving educational programs that address the risks and consequences of substance abuse.⁵ Providing school teachers, counselors, and principals with suicide prevention education is one way to begin implementing these recommendations, and address the impacts of suicide, suicide attempts, and suicidal ideation on Native Hawaiian and other students, as well as on their families and communities.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** SB703. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

⁴ OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, HAUMEA—TRANSFORMING THE HEALTH OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN WOMEN AND EMPOWERING WĀHINE WELL-BEING 19-25 (2018).

⁵ *Id.* at 25.



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

Date: 02/17/2021
Time: 10:00 AM
Location: Via Videoconference
Committee: Senate Judiciary

Department: Education
Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education
Title of Bill: SB 0703 RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING.
Purpose of Bill: Requires two hours of annual in-service training in suicide prevention for all teachers, principals, and school counselors.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of SB 703 as it aligns to its vision that ensures all of Hawaii's children are provided with opportunities that foster health, safety, education, school readiness, and success. The Department recognizes the critical role of educators in addressing suicide prevention and respectfully offers comments.

The Department continues to work diligently to provide Suicide Awareness and Prevention training as required in §302A-856, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which requires a Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training and a Risk Referral Protocol for all administrators, teachers, teacher assistants, and counselors.

Funds appropriated to the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) for youth suicide prevention supported the licenses for the Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) suicide prevention curriculum.

As of January 1, 2020, the Department, in collaboration with DOH and the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force, is able to provide the following approved array of training opportunities to schools at no cost:

Curriculum	Description
Suicide Prevention 101	A very basic presentation to introduce audiences to foundational information around suicide prevention such as core principles, local

	data, warning signs, and resources. Approximately 60-90 minutes.
QPR Online Suicide Prevention) Training	A very basic presentation taught online covering: How to Question, Persuade, Refer someone who may be suicidal; how to get help for yourself or learn more about preventing suicide, common causes of suicidal behavior, warnings signs of suicide; and how to get help for someone in crisis. Approximately 1 hour.
Youth Suicide and Bullying Prevention (YSBP)	Mental Health America of Hawaii's YSBP training offers strategies to recognize and intervene in suicide and bullying. In the workshops, participants learn to: 1) Define bullying and understand the roles we play in bullying; 2) Identify symptoms of depression and recognize signs of suicide; and 3) Listen, ask, support, and empower the youth to get help. Approximately 2-3 hours.
SafeTALK	"SafeTALK" (TALK = tell, ask, listen, keep safe) was brought to Hawaii via the "Hawaii Gatekeeper Training Initiative." It is a three-hour gatekeeper training intended for everyone in the community. It is an evidence-based training program which teaches individuals to be "alert helpers." Participants learn to recognize warning signs for suicide, approach someone at risk to ask if they are thinking about suicide, and then connect them to a caregiver or professional that can then work with the individual to keep the individual safe.
Youth Mental Health First Aid	Youth Mental Health First Aid is a full-day education program which introduces participants to unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health issues in adolescents, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and teaches individuals how to help an adolescent who may be in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge. This training was coordinated and sponsored through a federal grant awarded to the Hawaii State Department of Education. Approximately 6-8 hours.

The Department remains committed to supporting students' academic, social, physical and emotional health and providing a safe and protective learning environment. The Department continues to collaborate with DOH and other community agencies around suicide awareness and prevention.

Given the Department's ongoing work and commitment to provide suicide awareness and prevention training, the Department respectfully suggests that this measure is not necessary at this time.

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

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.

Hawaii Association of School Psychologists

February 15th, 2021
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Re: **Support of SB703**

Aloha Chair Rhoads and Senators:

The Hawaii Association of School Psychologists (HASP) supports Senate Bill 703, *Relating to Suicide Prevention Training*. According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP; 2015), youth suicide is the leading cause of death among school-aged youth. *Suicide is preventable*, and schools have an important role in preventing youth suicide. Best-practice literature suggests the entire school staff should work to create an environment where students feel safe, thus, schools need adequately trained staff for recognizing warning signs, and mental health professionals ready to provide intervention with students at risk for suicidal behavior.

When developing and implementing suicide prevention training programs, the HASP recommends including three critical content areas: *Risk Factors*; *Warning Signs*; and *What to Do*. Staff require the skills to recognize risk factors placing students at a higher risk of suicidal behavior, for example, feelings of hopelessness; mental illness, especially severe depression; history of suicidal thinking and behavior; interpersonal conflict and/or family stress; and presence of a firearm in the home. Examples of warning signs include suicidal threats in the form of direct (“I want to die”) and indirect (“I wish I could go to sleep and not wake up”); suicide notes, plans, or postings on social media; preoccupation with death; giving away prized possessions; sudden unexplained happiness; increased risk taking; and heavy drug/alcohol use. Finally, and most importantly, staff must know what to do, for example, remaining calm, nonjudgmental, and listening; asking directly about suicide; focusing on concern for the student’s well-being; avoiding being accusatory; reassuring them that there is help; providing constant supervision; and removing means for self-harm.

Education on protective factors, collaboration between schools and community providers, and encouraging reporting suicidal thoughts or behaviors to an adult (i.e., staff) is also recommended for inclusion in a suicide training program. Examples of protective factors include family and peer support, fostering school and community connectedness, healthy problem-solving skills, and easy access to effective medical and mental health services. Examples of school-community collaboration include establishing partnerships with local community mental health agencies to support re-entry plans in the event of a hospitalization.

In closing, the HASP encourages the passage of Senate Bill 307, and encourages the use of evidence-based training programs incorporating key factors outlined above. If the chair or the committee has additional questions or needs for clarification, the HASP’s contact information is provided below. Mahalo for your time and consideration of the present testimony.

Respectfully Submitted:

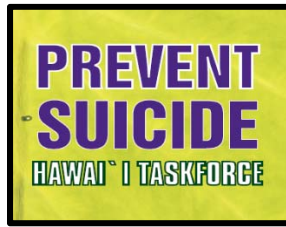
 Recoverable Signature

X *Alec H Marentic*

Alec H Marentic, M.S.E.

Co-Chair, HASP Legislation Committee

Signed by: d3f7d6cf-f198-4eaf-99a3-f66be9962843



February 16, 2021

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
 Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair
 Senate Committee on Judiciary
 Hawai'i State Legislature, Hawai'i State Capitol
 Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: COMMENTS for SB 703

*Relating to Suicide Prevention Training
 (Hearing on February 17, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. via videoconference)*

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Jeanelle Sugimoto-Matsuda. My professional training is in public health and community-based research, with the majority of my experience in mental/behavioral health and suicide prevention. I am also on the Steering (Leadership) Committee of the Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Taskforce (PSHTF), which is Hawaii's longest-standing community-based collaborative which voluntarily comes together to promote suicide prevention in our communities. I am also a Board Member for the Hawai'i Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), and am a certified trainer in the SafeTALK, Connect, and Suicide Prevention Foundations ("SP 101") curricula.

Please first allow me to convey a heartfelt THANK YOU for continuing to serve as champions for suicide prevention in Hawai'i. ***As you know, one person dies by suicide every two days in Hawai'i.*** As I often say in trainings, "This is an issue that does not discriminate" – suicide unfortunately affects all groups, communities, and disciplines. In addition, the immense stigma around mental health and suicidality increases the challenge that faces us when encouraging people to seek help when needed.

I would like to provide comments and context with respect to SB 703. Obviously, training is imperative to the State's suicide prevention movement, especially for our educators who have direct interaction with our youth. This is a key component of the Hawai'i Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan, authored by the Taskforce (requested by the Legislature, and filed in December 2017 – <https://health.hawaii.gov/injuryprevention/files/2019/02/Prevent-Suicide-Hawaii-Taskforce-Strategic-Plan-by-2025.pdf>).

Relating to suicide prevention training for educators, ***I wanted to call your attention to Act 270 from the 2019 Legislative Session*** (introduced by Senator Donovan Dela Cruz and signed into law by Governor Ige in July 2019). I thought the following comparison would be useful:

	SB 703 (2021 Session)	Act 270 (SB 383 SD2 HD1 CD1 from 2019 Session)
Training requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual (at least two hours) • For teachers, principals, and school counselors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual • For teachers, teacher assistants, administrators, and counselors
Protocol requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not discussed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk referral protocol must be put in place
Purview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not clearly described, though refers to "the department" • No charter or private schools mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOE complex areas and charter schools • No private schools mentioned

The Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Taskforce is actively partnering with the Department of Education and Department of Health to implement the requirements already set forth by Act 270. This has included certification of DOE staff and partners to administer trainings within their own schools and complex areas (as of today, 135 have been certified to deliver trainings). Therefore, while we whole-heartedly support the need for suicide prevention training for our educators, we would ***recommend additional resources and supports for the implementation of the existing Act 270.*** In addition, perhaps the Legislature may ***consider future amendments or new legislation to ensure that private schools are included*** in this larger statewide movement.

I am more than happy to discuss further, and address any questions or comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me (junesugi88@gmail.com, or 808-291-9930) if I can be of service around suicide prevention or related public health topics.

Although you must hear the words THANK YOU many times a day, please do know how genuine our gratitude really is. Many of us working in this field do so because of personal experiences with mental illness and/or suicide, and so our passion to “pass life forward” is real and true. We feel immensely honored by your leadership and commitment.

Most Sincerely,



Jeanelle Sugimoto-Matsuda, DrPH
(808) 291-9930
junesugi88@gmail.com



**Parents And
Children Together**

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT MATTER MOST

TO: Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)

DATE/LOCATION: February 17, 2021; 10:00 a.m., Video Conference

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 703– RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

We ask you to support HB 703 which requires two hours of annual in-service training in suicide prevention for all teachers, principals, and school counselors. We applaud the Department for the efforts already underway in regards to supporting student mental health. This is an important issue that has been raised over the past few years, especially by our youth, who recognize the growing need for more education, awareness and access to resources.

There is a growing need to address our youth’s social, emotional and mental health needs, especially in light of the added stressors that the COVID pandemic has placed on our youth.

- “The COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with mental health challenges related to the morbidity and mortality caused by the disease and to mitigation activities, including the impact of physical distancing and stay-at-home orders.” (CDC)
- Suicide awareness and prevention was a top priority voiced by Hawaii’s youth at the 2018 Hawaii Children’s and Youth Summit held at the Capitol.
- Deaths by suicide in Hawaii was the 9th leading cause of death in 2017 (CDC).
- Deaths by suicide in Hawaii was 15.2 per 100,000 people in 2017 (CDC). This is a huge increase from 2005 when the rate was 8.2 Per 100,000 people.

Training our teachers would be a supportive and preventative measure that can help to connect youth with resources BEFORE it’s too late. Suicide intervention, prevention and education initiatives for those who work directly with our youth can be life-saving. It also raises the awareness of caring for one’s mental health and can help to reduce the negative stigma associated with mental health related issues. These initiatives can allow for open conversations about the importance of one’s whole health, create safe opportunities for youth to reach out for help when they need and enable the community to be equipped with connecting our youth to appropriate supportive resources.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 18 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of SB 703**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



Hearing date: February 17, 2021
Hearing time: 10:00 AM
Location: Via Videoconference

Re: SB 703, Relating to Suicide Prevention Training

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

On behalf of Sutter Health Kāhi Mōhala, we are writing in support of SB 703, relating to suicide prevention training.

This bill requires two hours of annual in-service training in suicide prevention for all teachers, principals, and school counselors.

In Hawaii, one person dies by suicide every two days. That translates to an average of 190 suicides among Hawaii residents each year. Another nine non-residents die from suicide in the islands annually.

According to a recent report, statewide suicide rate was highest in 2020 during the months preceding the pandemic. The worst month was February, in which there were 25 suicide deaths in the state, according to the data. That compares to an average of 13 suicide deaths in 2015 to 2019 and an average of 14 suicide deaths in 2000 to 2014. Providing training for teachers is an important step toward helping students and families address the risks of suicide.

Sutter Health Kāhi Mōhala is a psychiatric hospital located in Ewa Beach, embracing an interdisciplinary perspective of care and incorporating an integrative approach to emotional, physical, cognitive and behavioral healthcare treatment. We are committed to serving the mental health needs of our community.

We are in support of SB 703.

Claudia Crist
Chief Executive Officer
Sutter Health Kāhi Mōhala

LATE

SB-703

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 2:47:20 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/17/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Stand in support