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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SB 1596 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO SCHOOL CAMPUSES

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023

OSA TUI, JR., PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

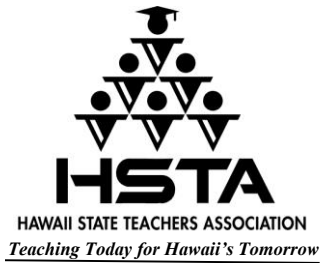
The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports SB 1596, SD1, HD1**, relating to school campuses. The bill establishes and appropriates moneys for a Maui campus housing pilot program, to be administered by the School Facilities Authority which shall make on-campus housing available to employees at Lahainaluna and Kulanihako'i high schools on the island of Maui. It also requires the School Facilities Authority and Department of Education to submit joint reports to the Legislature.

Hawai'i continues to suffer from a shortage of licensed teachers with over 1000 vacancies each year. Affordable options for teacher housing is one key strategy for the recruiting and retaining of teachers, particularly given that Hawai'i's teacher salaries continue to trail the nation, when adjusted for cost of living. Housing is a big portion of each teacher's paycheck.

If we concentrate on retaining our teachers, the Department of Education would not have to focus so much on the recruitment. **To recruit and retain effective educators, policymakers must find ways to lessen the financial burden of being a public school teacher.** Establishing an on-campus housing program on Maui is a good first step. An affordable housing option on campus would not only help teachers with affordable housing, but cost of living broadly would arguably be lessened. The ability to walk to work would save both in travel time and gas. The price of which remains very high.

In the islands, where new housing rarely becomes available, the percentage of renters who face cost burdens – financial handicaps incurred by people spending over 30 percent of their income on housing – is roughly 57 percent, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

Add to these struggles the spike in inflation we've seen in the last year, and ever-rising housing costs. According to Locations Hawaii, the median home cost in Hawaii at the end of 2021 was \$1.02 million. The median rent for a one-bedroom apartment



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in Honolulu is more than \$1,600 and a two-bedroom is \$2,180. As homes are sold, teachers who rent then struggle to find affordable replacement housing. We have had teachers, born and raised in Maui, who have been forced to relocate to the continent for work because they simply could not find affordable housing on Maui, or elsewhere in the islands.

To make ends meet, many teachers are forced to pick up second and third jobs, live in cramped studio apartments, and cut back on necessities like medical and dental care. Thus they cannot devote their full attention to their students and the preparation of lessons and grading that they usually complete after school once their students have left for the day. Those teachers for whom this pilot program could see significant easing of their financial burdens, as well as more time to commit to both their students and their own families.

Thus, a campus housing pilot program on Maui may assist teachers in attaining sustainable and stable residency, while staving off crushing debt burdens. Implementing and tracking the progress of the pilot program could point the way to more permanent affordable housing solutions for teacher in the future. It would also make the teaching profession more attractive by decreasing travel times and increasing educators' ability to find affordable housing that won't take their whole paycheck.

To take care of the needs of hardworking teachers in Hawai'i, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808 543.0011 • Fax: 808.528 0922

The Thirty-Second Legislature, State of Hawaii
The House of Representatives
Committee on Education

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

March 21, 2023

S.B. 1596, S.D. 1, H.D. 1 – Relating to School Campuses

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports S.B. 1596, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, which establishes and appropriates funds for a Maui campus housing pilot program.

School principals on the neighbor islands struggle with recruiting quality employees because of the lack of attainable and affordable housing. Housing can easily cost over half of an employees' monthly income, especially in the towns of Kihei and Lahaina. The HGEA supports the legislature's effort to find solutions to attract, recruit and retain public school employees and this pilot on-campus housing program at two of Maui's schools is a move in the right direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on S.B. 1596, S.D. 1, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

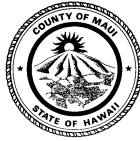
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March 18, 2023

TO: The Honorable Justin H. Woodson, Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Education

FROM: Alice L. Lee 
Council Chair

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 21, 2023; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1596, SD1, HD1, RELATING TO SCHOOL CAMPUSES**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to establish and appropriate money for a pilot program to provide for the planning, design, and construction of housing within or near a school campus for employees at schools in the Lahainaluna and Kulanihakoi complexes on the island of Maui.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I **support** this measure for the following reasons:

1. This measure would address Maui County's lack of attainable housing, which is a limiting factor to attracting and retaining quality, specialized school teachers, staff, and administrators.
2. Using existing infrastructure and State property to provide housing for school employees would reduce costs, construction time, and traffic congestion.
3. This measure furthers the following objective of the Maui County General Plan: "Encourage the State to attract and retain school administrators and educators of the highest quality."
4. This measure also furthers the following objective of the Maui Island Plan: "Provide a more expansive network of safe and convenient pedestrian-friendly streets. . . between neighborhoods and schools where appropriate."

For the foregoing reasons, I **support** this measure.