



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

**Date:** 02/02/2024

**Time:** 10:00 AM

**Location:** 312 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** House Housing

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB 2514 RELATING TO TEACHER HOUSING.

**Purpose of Bill:** Establishes the Teacher Home Assistance Program to be administered by the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation to provide housing vouchers to certain teachers who are employed by the Department of Education and commit to teach at hard-to-fill schools and charter schools for no less than 5 years. Appropriates moneys. Declares that the appropriation exceeds the state general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) would like to provide comments on HB 2514 Relating to Teacher Housing, which establishes the Teacher Home Assistance Program to be administered by the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) to provide housing vouchers to certain teachers who are employed by the Department of Education and commit to teaching at hard-to-fill schools and charter schools for no less than five years.

Housing affordability is the most significant recruitment and retention barrier that the Department experiences. It would be beneficial to provide teachers, regardless of their work location, with a voucher to offset their housing expenses. Teachers in non-hard-to-staff areas do not receive a \$3,000 - \$8,000 differential compared to their peers working in hard-to-staff areas.

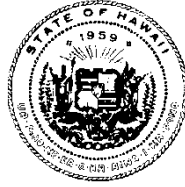
Additionally, the Department's current staffing level does not provide the ability to constantly monitor the eligibility parameters outlined in Subsection F, 1-7. While the Department is committed to providing the data needed so the HHFDC can implement

this program, additional positions and resources would be needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2514.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR



**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## **STATE OF HAWAII**

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of  
**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation  
Before the

### **HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING**

February 2, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Room 312

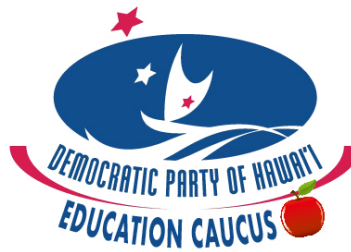
In consideration of  
**H.B. 2514**  
**RELATING TO TEACHER HOUSING.**

HHFDC has comments on HB 2514, which establishes the Teacher Home Assistance Program to be administered by HHFDC to provide housing vouchers to certain teachers who are employed by the Department of Education (DOE) and commit to teach at hard-to-fill schools and charter schools for no less than five years.

HHFDC recognizes the need for more housing opportunities for teachers and wants to support this effort. However, HHFDC does not have the staff to administer a housing-voucher program. In addition, our programs and resources are subject to Fair Housing laws, and therefore HHFDC needs assurance that any housing-occupancy preferences do not violate these laws.

The DOE has both statutory authority and a revolving fund established specifically for a teacher-housing program under Chapter 302A-832 and Chapter 302A-833, Hawaii Revised Statutes. Under these statutory provisions, the DOE can give preference and build for a specific population: their teachers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



## HOUSE BILL 2514, RELATING TO TEACHER HOUSING

FEBRUARY 2, 2024 · HSG HEARING

**POSITION:** Support.

**RATIONALE:** The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** HB 2514, relating to teacher housing, which establishes the Teacher Home Assistance Program to be administered by the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation to provide housing vouchers to certain teachers who are employed by the Department of Education and commit to teach at hard-to-fill schools and charter schools for no less than 5 years.

Teachers are the most important professionals in increasing student achievement. According to numerous studies, however, Hawai'i's average teacher salaries are the lowest in the nation when adjusted for cost of living. A 2020 study conducted by APA Consulting on behalf of the Hawai'i Department of Education found that when compared with other high-cost geographic locations, Hawai'i teachers are paid \$7,700 to \$26,000 less than their peers in school districts with similar costs of living, depending on length of service.

While that pay gap is decreasing because of the State Legislature's effort to fund differential pay increases and resolve salary compression in recent years, teachers are still underpaid compared to other professions that require a similar level of education. **Providing financial assistance to support teachers in obtaining housing or paying rent would help stem this problem, though this is not a substitute for paying educators professional salaries.**

**While Gov. Josh Green recently said in his State of the State address that the teacher shortage had been cut by 50 percent, this figure is not entirely accurate.** In fact, by other measures, the teacher shortage is getting worse. According to a presentation provided to the Hawai'i Board of Education by DOE officials on January 13, 2024, **the number of licensed teachers employed by our state's public school system has fallen from 95.5 percent of total positions in 2019 to 93.8 percent in 2023.** As of October 1, 2023, the department had over 800 teaching positions that were filled by educators who fell into the categories of unlicensed newly hired (emergency hires), unlicensed but in the process of completing a state approved teacher education program, or eligible for a teaching license that has not yet been acquired.

We note that Hawai'i residents face the second-highest housing costs in the nation, at more than twice the national average. Researchers who authored the National Low Income Housing Coalition's *Out of Reach 2023* report found that a full-time worker would need to earn \$41.83/hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market value in our state, with Honolulu experiencing a 67 percent increase in fair market rent between 2005 and 2015. Average rent for a two-bedroom unit surpassed \$2,000 in recent years.

One out of every four households in Hawai'i report that they are "doubling up" or are three paychecks or less away from being homeless, per the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice. Additionally, over 60 percent of households are severely cost-burdened, meaning that they pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing, a number that rises to over 80 percent of extremely low-income households. Notably, housing costs increased during the pandemic. In Honolulu, median single-family home prices reached a record of \$1.15 million in April of 2022, driven largely by sales to residential property investors. Unsurprisingly, our state is experiencing population decline. Hawai'i saw domestic out-migration increase for a seventh consecutive year in 2023, as our high cost of living continued to push people to the mainland.

To deliver the schools our keiki deserve, we must pay teachers what they're worth. It is the least we can do for the hardworking educators on whom our children's and our society's future depends.

**Kris Coffield · Chairperson, DPH Education Caucus · (808) 679-7454 · [kriscoffield@gmail.com](mailto:kriscoffield@gmail.com)**

**HB-2514**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 1:32:09 PM

Testimony for HSG on 2/2/2024 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Malia Tsuchiya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**IN STRONG SUPPORT**

**HB-2514**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 10:27:34 AM

Testimony for HSG on 2/2/2024 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Briann Starkey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**FROM: Briann Starkey**

**Kualapuu School Special Education/Hawaiian Immersion Teacher**

**RE: HB 2514, Relating to Teacher Housing**

**Hearing on February 2, 2024**

**IN STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2514**

**Aloha mai e na poo a me na lala o ka Aha Olelo,**

**My name is Briann Piliiana Starkey and I am a Hawaiian Immersion Special Education teacher at Kula Kaiapuni o Kualapuu. I have been an educator for almost 20 years and the teacher turnover rate here on Moloka'i needs to change.**

**I am testifying in SUPPORT of HB 2514 - Relating to Teacher Housing**

**On Moloka'i, one of the hard to fill areas, the teacher turnover rate is high. Principals tend to hire random teachers from the mainland and they don't last. I feel with this bill, we can recruit more serious teachers. More homegrown local teachers who would want to continue in this educational field and get vouchers if applicable to help their cost of living.**

**I also like that the bill includes Public Charter Schools because currently I work at the only Public Charter School on Molokai. The school with the highest teacher turnover. With the help of this bill, hopefully we can keep the teachers and see success & consistency in our students' data**

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**In conclusion I am testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2514.**

**I urge the Committee to PASS HB 2514. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**



**HB-2514**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 10:03:14 PM

Testimony for HSG on 2/2/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joyce Haase	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e,

My name is Joyce Haase and I am a teacher on the island of Molokai. I have taught on Molokai for 15 years and am testifying in support of HB2514. In Hawai'i we have both a teacher recruitment issue and a teacher retention issue and HB2514 will be an added retention incentive for recently hired, certificated teachers.

Rental housing in Hawai'i is expensive and hard to come by, this bill provides two years of rental assistance at \$500 per month for qualifying teachers in hard to fill areas. I would suggest the bill be extended to teachers who fit the qualifying criteria throughout the state, even if they do not live in a hard to fill area. My reasoning for this is that rental housing is expensive throughout the state and providing a teacher with two years of assistance will help them become established at a school and hopefully allow them to save money to purchase housing in the area.

Qualified teachers are a valuable commodity in Hawai'i, especially in "hard to fill" areas. On the island of Molokai, a significant number of our classroom teacher positions are vacant at the beginning of the school year which puts us in the "hard to fill" designation. Our Molokai schools are required to fill the classroom positions with non-certified, long term substitutes, a practice that reduces the quality of the education provided to the students. Providing a rental assistance voucher for teachers after their first year would be a substantial assistance and help teachers want to stay and teach on Molokai.

I recently met a young teacher from King Kamehameha III Elementary School on Maui. Her school burned down in the Lahaina fire, her rental apartment also burned down, she is now living with her boyfriend and two children in a rented apartment paying \$2800 per month. The \$500 teacher rental assistance voucher provided by HB2514 would make a big difference in her life and the life of her young children. By providing rental assistance to teachers we bolster and strengthen the communities of Hawai'i by supporting engaged educators who hold key positions at our public and charter schools.

Please vote in support of HB2514.

Thank you for your time,  
Joyce Haase



**HB-2514**

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 8:45:43 AM

Testimony for HSG on 2/2/2024 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angela Melody Young	CARES	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

CARES testifies in strong support.