



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

**Date:** 02/23/2024

**Time:** 01:00 PM

**Location:** 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** House Finance

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** HB 2759, HD1 RELATING TO SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH SERVICES.

**Purpose of Bill:** Appropriates funds to maintain seventy-five health technician positions within the Department of Education for the Hawaii Keiki Healthy and Ready to Learn Program. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) offers comments on HB 2759, HD1 which appropriates funds to maintain 75 health technician positions within the Department for the Hawaii Keiki program.

The Department has collaborated with the Hawaii Keiki program since its establishment in 2014 to ensure students are healthy and ready to learn. In Spring 2022, the Health Technician (formerly known as School Health Support Staff) position was created to aid in the Department's COVID-19 response efforts. Since that time, as attention shifted away from COVID-19, the Health Technician position was transformed to further enhance their support of the Hawaii Keiki program's nursing staff.

The Department supports the work of the Hawaii Keiki program which provides supplemental school-based health services for public school students. The program provides auxiliary direct services and collaborates with primary and tertiary care providers to address various needs to support all 258 Department schools across the state. However, the funding for this program request is not within the Department's Board of Education approved budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2759, HD1.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

#### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Friday, February 23, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

by

Dr. Clementina Ceria-Ulep, Dean  
Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing  
and

Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### HB 2759 HD1 – RELATING TO SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH SERVICES

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony **in strong support** of this measure, which aims to appropriate funds to the Department of Education to fund school health technicians. This will sustain the Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn (Hawai'i Keiki) program as it currently functions. The Hawai'i Keiki program employs 75 Health Technicians (HT); this appropriation request is to continue the services to the state by ensuring the continuation of funding by state funds once the federal funding expires.

During the initial years of the COVID pandemic, Hawai'i Keiki received federal funds to support the health and well-being of enrolled students at the Department of Education to the Hawai'i Keiki Program with a particular focus on preventing the transmission of and responding to the impact of COVID. The impact of the HT's role within the Hawai'i Keiki school nursing program has grown considerably. From school year (SY) 2019-2020 to school year 2022-2023 (see slide graphic at end of testimony):

- Hawai'i Keiki program visits increased from 8,188 to 126,994 (1,451%), due to services provided by HTs.
- Student and staff education encounters increased from 3,911 to 17,339 (343%).
- Health screenings increased from 3,962 to 11,027 (178%).

Today, Hawai'i Keiki serves all 258 public schools statewide with approximately 160 registered nurses (RNs), advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioners, health technicians (i.e., community health workers, nurse aides, medical assistants), dental hygienists, and dentists who extend the clinical reach of the Hawai'i Keiki program. The Hawai'i Keiki program's HTs impact in SY 2022-2023 is exemplary providing evidence of the continued need for this role and workforce. Additionally, without these staff, the need for these services would remain. School staff, teachers, and principals are able to dedicate their time to their primary mission of education with the confidence and knowledge that the physical health and

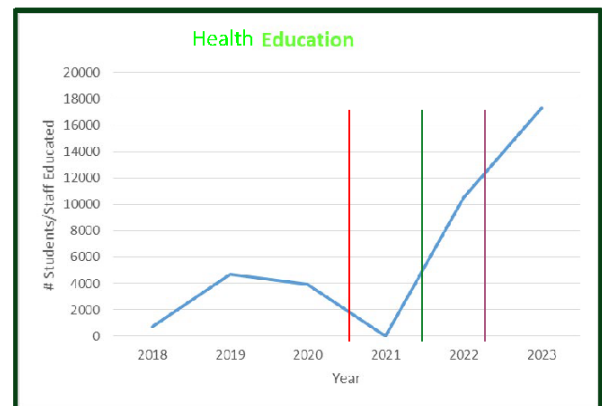
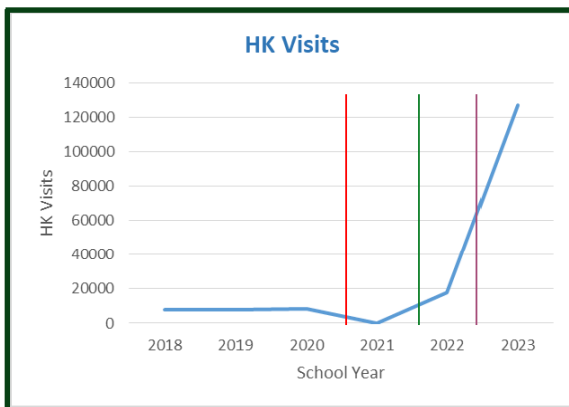
well-being of students will be supported by the excellent Hawai'i Keiki HTs, in addition to APRNs and RNs.

Thirty-six (36) of the 75 HTs statewide provide services at schools on the islands of Maui (10 HTs), Moloka'i (3 HTs), Kaua'i (6 HTs), and Hawai'i (17 HTs). A discontinuation of services, especially in these areas, would be felt harder because access to alternative resources are more limited than for those on O'ahu. The HTs provide a valuable safety net to extend the reach of the HK Program, particularly in our most underserved communities.

It is with great pleasure that the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing (NAWSON) partners with the Department of Education in the delivery of school nursing care so that teachers, staff, and principals may focus on delivering exemplary education. NAWSON respectfully requests favorable consideration of this measure.

## Comparison of Program Impact SY19-20 Versus SY22-23

- 1451% increase in **HK Visits**
- 343% increase in students/staff **Health Education**
- 178% increase in keiki screened



*Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy & Ready to Learn*

COVID RNs  
Complex RNs  
SHSS/HTs

*Note: The dip in 2021 is due to the change in school health practice related to COVID-19 protocols. All visits during this time were telehealth which is not included in the data for these graphs.*



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance  
Friday, February 23, 2024; 1:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308  
Via Videoconference**

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2759, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH SERVICES.**

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **OFFERS COMMENTS** on House Bill No. 2759, House Draft 1, RELATING TO SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH SERVICES.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2024-2025, to maintain seventy-five (75) health technician positions within the Department of Education for the Hawaii Keiki: Health and Ready to Learn Program.

This measure would take effect on July 1, 3000.

While we welcome the intent of this measure, the HPCA is concerned that this measure may unintentionally and inadvertently conflict with efforts to establish school-based health clinics at certain public schools situated near existing community health center facilities. These school-based clinics provide broader and more intensive primary care services than what would be provided solely by an advance practice registered nurse or health technician assigned to a complex of schools as proposed under the Keiki Program. Furthermore, the students and faculty have access to many other departments and programs within the FQHC organizations. These include behavior health, wrap-around services, preventive pediatric care, oral health, and more.

**In your efforts to provide baseline primary health care services to all school-aged youth, we respectfully urge you not to take any steps that may duplicate existing services, diminish the level of services that are currently provided, or preclude the establishment of more intensive and comprehensive services at public schools.**

Presently, Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, Hawaii Island Community Health Center, Wahiawa Health, and Hana Health have established school-based clinics at public schools situated near their facilities. Other community health centers have examined these models and are currently considering entering into similar agreements with the Department of Education (DOE) to provide comparable services at nearby schools. We are concerned that the expansion of the Keiki Program within the DOE may conflict with these efforts with community health centers and unfortunately reduce the level of services that are provided at certain schools.

In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH), in conjunction with the DOE, partnered with the HPCA and FQHCs throughout the State to provide COVID-19 mitigation and other primary health care services at public schools and charter schools. The HPCA is currently working with both departments to continue these services and possibly expand them moving forward.

Be that as it may, it should also be noted that the Keiki Program is not established in statute. As such, its continued existence is solely at the discretion of the Superintendent and the Board of Education.

As mentioned earlier, HPCA is merely commenting on this measure and will continue to monitor this measure as it goes through the legislative process. We are partners with the entire community and want to work with all parties for what is best for our citizens.

To ensure that the Keiki Program not conflict with the efforts of Community Health Centers, we respectfully ask that:

- (1) The DOE be required to partner with the Public Health Nursing Branch of the DOH pursuant to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the DOE, DOH, the Keiki Program, **and each federally qualified health center and rural health clinic geographically situated within each participating complex of schools**; and
- (2) The Keiki Program be precluded from providing services at any school where a school-based clinic established pursuant to an MOU or contract between a federally qualified health center or rural health clinic and the DOE exists or may exist in the future. Further, the amendment would clarify that **precluded services would include any service that duplicates any service that is either provided or offered at a school-based clinic.**

**Testimony on House Bill No. 2759, House Draft 1**  
**Friday, February 23, 2024; 1:00 p.m.**  
**Page 3**

Lastly, we respectfully request that the following language be added to the committee report, should the Committee desire to report this measure out:

*“It is the intent of your Committee that this bill not be construed in any way to preclude or limit the receipt of federal funds to establish any school-based clinic or any primary care health services at school-based facilities pursuant to a grant or other financial arrangement with a federally qualified health center or rural health clinic.”*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or [eabe@hawaiiipca.net](mailto:eabe@hawaiiipca.net).



*Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.*

To: House Committee on Education  
RE: HB2759 HD1 in strong support  
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 308  
February 23, 2024; 1:00pm

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT of House Bill 2759 HD1** relating to School-Based Health Services.

Exceeding the general fund expenditure ceiling to sustain Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn Program (Hawai'i Keiki) health technician (HT) positions are essential to keep our keiki happy, healthy, and ready to learn. Hawaii Keiki facilitates access to quality school-based health services by providing direct services and coordinating care with primary and tertiary care providers. Hawai'i Keiki provides access to primary prevention efforts (e.g., screenings) and identifies critical healthcare service gaps in oral and mental health. Further, HTs help families sign up for social services such as Medicaid and facilitate access to care by connecting families to their medical or dental home. School-based programs are unique in meeting children where they are, taking a whole-child approach toward education and care.

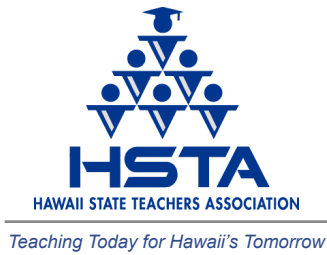
In three years, from 2019-2020 to the 2022-2023 school year, the Hawai'i Keiki program saw a surge in visits by public school students by 1,451%. This growth underscores the impactful services delivered by Hawai'i Keiki's HTs, significantly benefiting the well-being of Hawai'i's keiki in our public school system. Given the consistent and growing demand for the Hawai'i Keiki program's services, we must continue to provide the necessary resources to sustain their operations as HTs are an efficient and cost-effective approach to increasing access to healthcare services.

Hawai'i Keiki fills our communities' needs by bringing healthcare to public school students across the state. This school-based health service strengthens and streamlines collaborative health service delivery to improve learning and health in our schools. Children learn best when they are safe, healthy, and well. Let us continue to support our keiki. Please support HB2759 HD1.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Mai Hall, M.Ed.  
Children's Health Coordinator





1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 • Fax: (808) 839-7106 • Web: www.hsta.org

**Osa Tui, Jr.**  
President

**Logan Okita**  
Vice President

**Lisa Thompson**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Ann Mahi**  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Item: **HB2759 HD1 - Relating to school-based health services**

Position: **Support**

Hearing: **February 23, 2024, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 308**

Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association **supports** HB2759 HD1 which appropriates funds to maintain seventy-five health technician positions within the Department of Education for the Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn Program.

“The legislature envisions a future with one nurse on site at every school...” HSTA could not agree more. Until such time comes, we appreciate the work being done by health technicians to ensure that our keiki are as healthy and ready to learn as they can be. Many families may not fully utilize (or be able to fully utilize) health services outside of the school setting. Having health technicians in our schools enables students to more fully attend and realize success in their classes.

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



**Written Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Friday, February 23, 2024 at 1:00 P.M.**

**by  
Laura Reichardt, APRN, AGPCNP-BC, FAAN  
Hawai'i State Center for Nursing  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2759, HD1  
RELATING TO SCHOOL BASED HEALTH SERVICES**

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony **in strong support** of this measure, HB 2759, HD1 which aims to appropriate funds to the Department of Education to fund school health technicians (HTs). This will sustain the Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn program as it currently functions. The Hawai'i Keiki program employs 75 HTs. This appropriation request is to continue the services to the state by committing funding by state funds once the federal funding expires at the end of the current school year.

The National Academies of Medicine's (NAM) Future of Nursing 2030 report highlights school nursing in the Chapter "The Role of Nurses in Improving Healthcare Access and Quality". In this chapter, they note "Access to school nurses helps increase health care equity for students. For many children living in or near poverty, the school nurse may be the only health care professional they regularly access."<sup>1</sup> The NAM continues, "*Healthy children learn better; educated children grow to raise healthier families advancing a stronger, more productive nation for generations to come. School nurses work to assure that children have access to educational opportunities regardless of their state of health.*"

The services that the HTs provide extend the reach of school nurses to students who may otherwise have health needs that are affecting their wellbeing as well as their ability to learn. The HTs services are providing a considerable function to the school health environment and broadening the impact of the Hawai'i Keiki program. This team-based model is exemplary in that it maximizes staff and outcomes.

The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing thanks the Committee for considering this measure and for your longstanding advocacy and vision for children who are healthy and ready to learn.

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<sup>1</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2021. The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.17226/25982>."

*The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to engage in nursing workforce research, promote best practices and disseminate knowledge, cultivate a diverse and well-prepared workforce, support healthy work environments, champion lifelong learning, and strategically plan for sound nursing workforce policy.*

**HB-2759-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 8:10:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Zoe Shih	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Zoe Shih. I am a Family Nurse Practitioner with the Hawaii Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn Program. My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the program or any of it's affiliates.

I am writing in strong support of HB 2759. I currently work with 6 Health Technicians in the Kau-Keaau-Pahoa complex area on Hawaii Island. These individuals have helped with all the coordination for events such as vision and hearing screenings, dental sealants, sports physicals, and vaccinations. They assist with the documentation into each students chart in Infinite Campus so that the results are saved into one location. They provide seamless coverage of health rooms when a School Health Aid is tied up with an emergency or other situations on campus. They are a much needed resource for the DOE and Hawaii Keiki to provide care to students.

In the Kau-Keaau-Pahoa (KKP) complex area we have tasked our Health Technicians with many things but one that stands out is a project that has had a meaningful impact in our area. Students often move from one school to the next in KKP and it is a challenge for all of their hard copy health documents to follow them. Our Health Technicians have scanned all of the hard copy health documents for every student in KKP which makes their transition into their new schools go smoother. Many families rely on the school to be the one place that gathers their child's collective vaccine record as they may have gone to different clinics over the years. Now we have an electronic copy of all those documents in one place. This is a project that would not be possible without the Health Technicians.

Please consider passing HB 2759 so that we can continue to do more amazing work supporting the keiki and families of Hawaii.

Thank you for your time,

Zoe Shih, APRN

**HB-2759-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 8:11:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Danielle Doo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Danielle Doo. I am a Registered Nurse with the Hawaii Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn Program. My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the program or any of its affiliates.

I write to emphasize the critical role of Hawaii Keiki Health Techs, particularly at Kapaa Elementary School, the busiest health room on Kaua'i. With upwards of 50 students seeking assistance daily, many with acute medical needs like asthma, the presence of a Health Tech is essential to triage students safely.

In times of emergency, when a School Health Assistant (SHA) must attend to an acute situation, the Health Tech assumes responsibility for remaining students in the Health room, ensuring their safety and continued operations. If the Hawaii Keiki Registered Nurse (RN) is on campus, the Health Tech aids in taking vital signs, documenting procedures, timing treatments, and contacting emergency services. This enables the RN to dedicate their attention to directly caring for the child in need, while the SHA remains available to manage operations and care for students in the health room.

The demands of Kapaa Elementary's health room underscore the vital importance of Hawaii Keiki Health Techs in ensuring the safety and well-being of our students. I urge your support and resources to sustain their invaluable work.

In addition to their primary responsibilities, our Health Techs have consistently stepped up to fill in for School Health Assistants (SHAs) for extended periods. Following resignations and turnover, our Health Techs have provided full-time coverage for empty health rooms, collectively ensuring up to four months of support.

It is crucial to note that Kauai has had no substitute SHAs for many years. Without the presence of Health Techs, several health rooms would be empty and untrained staff would attempt to care for students, potentially compromising their safety and well-being.

Thank you for your support in retaining this invaluable positions,

Danielle Doo



**Written Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
February 23, 2024 at 1:00 P.M.  
Room 308 State Capitol and Via Videoconference**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2759  
RELATING TO SCHOOL BASED HEALTH SERVICES**

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Finance Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony **in strong support** of HB2759 which aims to appropriate funds to the Department of Education to fund school health technicians (HTs). This will sustain the Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn program as it currently functions. The Hawai'i Keiki program employs 75 HTs. This appropriation request is to continue these services through additional funding.

The National Academies of Medicine's Future of Nursing 2030 report highlights school nursing in the Chapter "The Role of Nurses in Improving Healthcare Access and Quality". In this chapter, they note "Access to school nurses helps increase health care equity for students. For many children living in or near poverty, the school nurse may be the only health care professional they regularly access." The NAM continues, "*Healthy children learn better; educated children grow to raise healthier families advancing a stronger, more productive nation for generations to come. School nurses work to assure that children have access to educational opportunities regardless of their state of health.*"

The services that the HTs provide extend the reach of school nurses to students who may otherwise have health needs that are affecting their wellbeing as well as their ability to learn. The HTs services are providing a considerable function to the school health environment and broadening the impact of the Hawai'i Keiki program. This team-based model is exemplary in that it maximizes staffing workload and community outcomes.

It is for these reasons that the Hawai'i American Nurses Association is in strong support of HB 2759.

**Contact information for Hawai'i – American Nurses Association:**

**President: Dr. Nancy Atmospera-Walch, DNP, CCHN, FAAN,**  
[president@hawaii-ana.org](mailto:president@hawaii-ana.org) **Executive Director: Dr. Linda Beechinor, APRN,**  
[executivedirector@hawaii-ana.org](mailto:executivedirector@hawaii-ana.org)



National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2021. The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.17226/25982>.”

**HB-2759-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 9:35:34 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas H Joslyn	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii has a new 2024-2025 budget of \$9.6 BILLION! Hawaii Department of Education spends \$17,321 per student each year. Hawaii ranks 28th in funding level among the 50 states and Washington, D.C. The national average was \$15,446. The DOE has an annual revenue of \$3,396,555,000. Overall, the district spends \$9,805.6 million on instruction, **\$6,001.0 million on support services and \$757.6 million on other expenses.** As well ment as this bill is to provide health services to our keiki's, I can't beleive that the DOE can't trim enough from there own budget to fund this "school based health services, with the funds they already recieve. The State of Hawaii Auditors 2021 report stated "..... the auditors identified one significant deficiency in internal control over *financial reporting*. A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet *important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.*" **Hawaii does not need new funding, it needs better management of the funds the DOE already recieves.** Respectfully submitted. Thank you for your consideration.

**HB-2759-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 9:52:12 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katherine F Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in strong support of this measure, HB 2759, HD1, which aims to appropriate funds to the Department of Education to fund school health technicians (HTs). This will sustain the Hawai‘i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn program as it currently functions. The Hawai‘i Keiki program employs 75 HTs. This appropriation request is to continue the services to the state by committing funding by state funds once the federal funding expires at the end of the current school year.**

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**The services that the HTs provide extend the reach of school nurses to students who may otherwise have health needs affecting their well-being and ability to learn. The HTs services are providing a considerable function to the school health environment and broadening the impact of the Hawai‘i Keiki program. This team-based model is exemplary in that it maximizes staff and outcomes.**

**I thank the Committee for considering this measure and for your longstanding advocacy and vision for children who are healthy and ready to learn.**



Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the esteemed Committee:

While the intent of this measure is a benevolent one, I am concerned that these services already exist with School Health Aides and this bill would duplicate already existing services. It would preferable to increase the numbers of School Health Aides (SHA) in addition to their salary. The SHA wage is currently below proposed salaries for the Technicians whose position description overlaps greatly with the SHA. While well-meaning, this role duplicates existing services while further confusing the many health and nursing roles provided for our school-aged keiki in DOE settings. Very respectfully, Karen Boyer, RN, MN, FNP O'ahu resident