

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI
SUPERINTENDENT

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

Date: 01/29/2025

Time: 10:30 AM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Culture & Arts

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 0133 RELATING TO SURFING.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education to support the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) recognizes the intent of HB 133, and respectfully offers comments and concerns.

Since 2005, the Department has developed regulations to implement surfing as a high school sport. In 2016, the Hawaii State Board of Education approved the Board Policy 101-11, Surfing, which established surfing as a high school sport.

The Department appreciates the intent behind the proposed appropriations to support surfing in high school athletic programs. Funding is one of the many barriers to implementing surfing as a sport. Surfing presents unique risk factors, including ensuring safe practice locations, monitoring unpredictable ocean conditions, and managing liability concerns.

Any new competitive athletic sport offered in the Department is determined by the respective league associations where it is proposed and approved by the league members. On Oahu, surfing has not been proposed by any Department high school due to significant risk factors making it difficult to sanction. With the large number of schools on Oahu, there are concerns about accessible and safe surfing areas to conduct practices and the inability to control the practice environment. Many high schools face inconsistent access to suitable beaches that are safe and appropriate for surfing practices and competitions.

The Department reached out to the surfing community and discovered that organizing a single surfing competition is likely to cost approximately \$4,350 for operations. This amount covers essential expenses such as judges, beach marshals, tabulators, production staff, lifeguards, bonded security officers, contest directors, administrative services, meals, and supplies. This cost does not include funding for coaches' salaries, bus transportation, and equipment. Comparatively, this would make surfing the most expensive sport to operate; for example, the costliest football game amounted to approximately \$1,800 in school operational costs.

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

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR

REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR



Testimony of Derek S.K. Kawakami

Mayor, County of Kaua'i

Before the

House Committee on Culture & Arts

January 29, 2025; 10:30 AM

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

In consideration of

House Bill 133 Relating to Surfing

Honorable Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and Members of the Committee:

The County of Kaua'i is in **support** of HB 133 Relating to Surfing which appropriates funds to the Department of Education to support the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport.

The sport of surfing embodies the social and cultural fabric of Hawai'i. With its long history in our islands and deemed by many as the most popular sport in Hawai'i, the sport of surfing was sanctioned by the Department of Education and approved by the Board of Education in 2016.

Since then, only one of five state interscholastic athletic leagues have embraced the sport, leaving our surfing students with limited opportunities to compete at the high school level. This bill not only proposes to add funding to support surfing as a competitive high school sport, but also lends the opportunity for discussion and encouragement to the other interscholastic athletic leagues to consider adopting the sport.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this measure, HB 133 Relating to Surfing.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Fern Holland
Arryl Kaneshiro



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kauai, Hawaii 96766

January 22, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
HB 133, RELATING TO SURFING
House Committee on Culture & Arts
Wednesday, January 29, 2025
10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 309
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Kapela and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 133, Relating to Surfing. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kauai County Council.

I wholeheartedly support the intent of HB 133, which would greatly affect the Kauai community.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 133. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

ADDISON BULOSAN
Councilmember, Kauai County Council

AAO:mn

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/24/2025 9:29:49 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sebastian Zietz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Sebastian Zietz, and I am writing in strong support of the appropriation of funds to the Department of Education to establish surfing as an interscholastic sport in our schools. As a successful professional surfer, passionate advocate for youth development and a firm believer in the cultural and health benefits of surfing, I recognize the immense value this initiative will bring to our students, our communities, and the future of Hawaii's ocean heritage.

Surfing is not only an integral part of our islands' identity but also a powerful tool for personal growth, discipline, and well-being. By formally incorporating surfing into our schools' athletic programs, we can provide students with opportunities to develop essential life skills such as perseverance, responsibility, and respect for the ocean environment. Surfing promotes physical fitness, mental resilience, and environmental stewardship—qualities that align with the holistic educational goals of our state. Young surfers can aspire to be so much more than just professional athletes. Surfers are marine biologists, scientists, physicians, inventors, activists, business owners, educators .. the list goes on.

Furthermore, establishing surfing as an interscholastic sport creates equitable access for students across all socioeconomic backgrounds. Many aspiring young surfers currently face financial and logistical barriers that prevent them from fully engaging with the sport. Providing institutional support through our schools will allow a broader range of students to participate, fostering inclusivity and community engagement.

This initiative also aligns with Hawaii's broader commitment to preserving and promoting its cultural heritage. Surfing, originating in our islands, carries deep historical and cultural significance. By recognizing it as an official sport, we honor our traditions while providing students with meaningful opportunities to connect with their heritage in a modern, competitive context.

I urge you to support this appropriation, as it will not only benefit our youth by encouraging healthy lifestyles and educational engagement but also solidify Hawaii's role as a global leader in surfing. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,

Sebastian Zietz

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 2:57:43 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kori Briones	'Iolani Surf Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm writing to show my support in HB133 that will make surfing an official sport on Oahu and all neighbor islands. Since 2015, I have served as a coach on the 'Iolani School surf team since its inauguration. I have seen the students and their competition grow and have watched their skill level improve immensely. Just like all athletes at 'Iolani have to take their concussion tests at the beginning of their seasons, our surfers and coaches have gone through many safety requirements and then some. We have all our surfers become junior lifeguard certified, CPR and First Aid certified as well. All coaches go through the same certifications too.

Hawaii is the birth place of surfing, our islands are surrounded by water and these students would still be out in the water no matter what. It only makes sense that they can be able to represent their school, just like any other sport.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,

Kori Briones

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 3:18:51 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Butler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB133
RELATING TO SURFING
January 2025**

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christopher Butler, and I have been a coach of the ‘Iolani School Surf Team since 2016. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of **HB133**, which proposes the appropriation of funds to the Department of Education for the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport in Hawai‘i.

Surfing has long been an official sport in California for over ten years. Hawai‘i is the birthplace of surfing and with the recent addition of surfing into the Olympics, ISA World Competition, and NSSA National College and High School contests in California, it is time to make surfing an official sport in Hawaii.

1. Surfing originated in Hawai‘i and is deeply woven into the fabric of our history and culture. Making it an official high school sport pays homage to this legacy while encouraging students to engage with and preserve their cultural identity.
2. Surfing promotes physical fitness through strength, endurance, and balance training. Beyond the physical, it fosters mental well-being, helping students manage stress, build confidence, and develop resilience.
3. Surfing as a high school sport, validates surfers passion, creates team comraderie, builds critical life skills such as discipline, time management, teamwork, and perseverance. These attributes translate into academic success and personal growth.
4. **Ocean Safety and Environmental Awareness**
Surfing cultivates an intimate understanding of the ocean, including tides, currents, and weather patterns. These skills contribute to safer ocean practices while fostering environmental stewardship and responsibility for our island resources.

Formalizing surfing as an interscholastic sport would benefit Hawai‘i’s students by providing them with a meaningful avenue to celebrate their culture, maintain physical and mental health, and prepare for future opportunities. I respectfully urge the passage of **HB133** to make this vision a reality for students across our state.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Christopher Butler

Coach, 'Iolani School Surf Team

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 3:55:25 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Matsuda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am Beth Matsuda. I work on recruiting high schools that want to form Surf Clubs with the intention of it becoming an interscholastic sport. Surfing started here and is our state sport. Five years ago I only had 6 schools and now have 20 schools with more wanting to form their own surf clubs. I have 12 OIA schools and 8 ILH schools. The interest is there and growing. As a club sport, we do not receive any funding from the schools. The biggest obstacle is money as each has to pay for the certification of their coaches, purchase matching team rashguards and our own competition fees.

I know there is a safety concern. The document that the BOE approved goes over all the safety concerns. The coaches are required to take a Coaches Ocean Risk Assessment class where they are taught rescue techniques, how to evaluate and address possible risks for their home beach, how to mitigate those risks. They also must write a Risk Assessment for their home beach and how they will address those risks. The students are required to take Ocean Safety's Jr. Lifeguard program. We only practice at beaches that are manned by Ocean Safety Lifeguards. Before each practice we check with the lifeguards about ocean conditions and concerns. We reserve the right to cancel practices if the conditions are too risky.

i plead with you to support our students in becoming an interscholastic sport. These are students who don't necessarily participate in regular sports. This gives them a chance to keep their grades up, and represent their schools. This can also lead to possible careers as lifeguards, product spokesperson and other maritime occupations,

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 4:04:55 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelani Kazama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Surfing should be recognized as an interscholastic sport in Hawaii. Many of our local kids have grown up spending time in our ocean, surfing, body boarding, and bodysurfing. It is only fitting to recognize the time and talent our youth display in surfing, just as those who spend their time and talents honing other athletic, mental, and physical skills in their respective sports. Let our youth have the opportunity to compete and be recognized by their schools doing a sport they love and work at... Surfing!

Mahalo!

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 4:05:39 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in favor HB 133. I have been the co-coordinator of Maui Interscholastic League surfing since our principals adopted surfing as an interscholastic sport in 2013. We had our first MIL surf season in spring, 2014. I organized high school club surfing on Maui from 1995 to 2013.

We have 23 Hawaii High School Athletic Association interscholastic sports including esports and girls flag football, but no surfing. Surfing is the one sport Hawaii can claim as its' own. Duke Kahanumoku, is the father of modern day surfing, Hawaii's Carissa Moore, won surfing's first Olympic gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics.

We have 12 schools competing in surfing in the MIL. In the 10 years we have had DOE-sanctioned surfing on Maui, we have had no major injuries. The athletic trainers love working our surf events, because there may be an occasional reef cut or wana in the foot, but no concussions, fractures or dislocations.

I was also a wrestling coach at Lahainaluna for almost 40 years. I know how important athletics are for a well-rounded student experience. You have to question, why do we even have high school sports? If it is for academic achievement, developing teamwork, leadership skills, time management, goal setting, physical health, mental health, and social skills, then why not surfing?

No other DOE coach in any sport, has to be certified to such strict standards as the DOE requirements for a surf coach. There was a recent story in the Honolulu Star-Bulletin about preventing tourist and local drownings. Our surf coaches learn ocean risk assessment, lifesaving skills and ocean rescue technique plus CPR and first aid, in addition to a timed swim test. They then pass these skills on to their student / athletes. These students are like lifeguards in the ocean, we're training a 120-150 new lifeguards in the ocean on Maui every spring.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 5:51:10 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Porec	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill. I am a teacher and coach for the surf team at Leilehua high. I am willing to donate my time, energy and money for the kids to compete. We already have a structure in place and just need help with contest fees. The argument that it is too dangerous is weak. The kids all have been jr. Lifeguard certified and have supplemental insurance. I've seen hundreds of concussions from football, yet never a one from surfing. The students who are currently on the team are dedicated student athletes who need an outlet. Please help us.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 5:53:40 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Sanita	Hana High and Elementary School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of Scholastic Surfing in Hawaii Schools
By Christopher Sanita, Principal of Hāna High and Elementary School & Expert Surfer
from Hāna, Maui**

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Christopher Sanita, and I am honored to serve as the principal of Hāna School and a lifelong surfer from the shores of East Maui. Surfing is more than just a sport—it is our heritage, our culture, and for many of us, a way of life. As an educator and waterman, I stand before you today to urge the expansion of scholastic surfing throughout Hawai‘i’s public schools.

Surfing as a Cultural Foundation

Hawai‘i is the birthplace of surfing, a gift from our ancestors who saw the waves not as obstacles, but as pathways to connection—with the ocean, with each other, and with ourselves. It is only fitting that our keiki, the future caretakers of this land and sea, have the opportunity to embrace and excel in this tradition as part of their education.

Just as we have embraced football, basketball, and volleyball as integral parts of student development, we must recognize that surfing holds an even deeper significance for our islands. It connects our keiki to Hawaiian values such as mālama ‘āina (caring for the land and sea), kuleana (responsibility), and lōkahi (unity).

Academic and Personal Growth Through Surfing

Beyond its cultural importance, surfing provides incredible benefits for student development:

- **Physical & Mental Well-Being:** Surfing builds strength, endurance, and balance while also serving as a natural stress reliever. It teaches patience, resilience, and adaptability—skills that translate into the classroom and beyond.
- **Engagement & Attendance:** Students who participate in surfing programs are more likely to be engaged in school, stay active, and maintain a sense of purpose. When students are excited about learning—whether in the classroom or in the water—they are more likely to succeed.
- **STEM & Environmental Education:** Surfing is deeply connected to oceanography, meteorology, and environmental science. Through a scholastic surfing program, students can learn about tides, swells, marine ecosystems, and climate change, fostering a greater sense of environmental stewardship.

Opportunities for Equity & Inclusion

Surfing has long been seen as a sport for those with access—access to transportation, equipment, and mentorship. By establishing surfing as a recognized scholastic sport in every complex area, we ensure that all students, regardless of background, can participate and benefit from this experience. Through school-based programs, we can provide necessary resources—boards, gear, and coaching—to make surfing accessible to every child who wants to learn.

A Vision for Hawai‘i’s Future

Imagine a future where our keiki can represent their schools in surfing competitions, earn scholarships, and even pursue professional careers while staying rooted in their communities. Imagine students growing up with an educational system that honors their cultural identity and encourages them to engage with the ocean as both a classroom and a sanctuary.

We have the unique opportunity to align our education system with our values—to offer a sport that is truly Hawaiian and prepare our students not just for careers, but for a lifetime of connection to the ‘āina and moana.

Call to Action

I humbly ask for your support in establishing scholastic surfing programs across Hawai‘i’s public schools. Let’s make sure that our students—our future leaders—have the opportunity to embrace the ocean, to honor their culture, and to thrive through the sport that was born in these islands.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 6:26:51 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Fairchild	Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to testify in strong support of HB 133 to appropriate funds to the DOE to promote the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport.

Surfing is a Native Hawaiian sport and Hawaii has ideal surfing conditions. We should be helping all kids in Hawaii to have an opportunity to build surfing skills, as well as the associated swimming and water safety skills that save lives. More local kids of all economic backgrounds would get access and exposure to the sport, as part of a healthy lifestyle, a stronger connection to the ocean, and a deeper understanding of culture.

Though surfing was declared an interscholastic sport several years back, at most public schools outside of Maui, surfing remains either a club sport or uninvolved in the school sports opportunities. Funding is needed to provide insurance, organize competitions, subsidize equipment, and provide stipends to coaches (who are often teachers).

The current system for surf teams to move from clubs to true interscholastic status requires a threshold of a certain number of teams to be established within a league. This depends on students and coaches to raise money or pay out of pocket for the required safety training and competition costs. Many public school families cannot afford these entry costs on their own so the threshold has not been met in any league outside of Maui County. With funding, surf teams could be established at enough schools to meet the threshold in other leagues, triggering the HHSAA to hold a statewide tournament in surfing, officially making it a statewide interscholastic sport. Once established as a statewide interscholastic sport, surfing would be budgeted for like other high school sports. Please help this to happen.

Mahalo,

Sarah Fairchild

Executive Director, Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 6:52:38 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kylie	Leilehua High School - Surf Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I am the team captain of Leilehua High School’s Surf Team. Last year, I started our surf team with my friend and the support of our parents. When people asked me what sport I was going to do in high school or if I do a sport, my response was always... I Surf! Surfing is my sport. Even though I don’t do it competitively outside of school it’s my sport because that’s what I love and that’s all I do on the weekends and after school.

While Surfing is a sanctioned sport there are no committed resources. Surfing aligns with the DOE’s Vision and Values and is connected to our history, culture, ‘aina, and career opportunities here in Hawai’i. Being in our second year, I have seen so much benefits but also challenges.

Surfing for my high school has given me an opportunity to excel in surfing, participate in contests and meet other students, and fuel my passion for the ocean while also staying active and being part of something to represent my school with other students that surf & bodyboard.

I also like that we are required to take Jr Lifeguard because it keeps us safe but also allows us to be aware of the safety of others anytime we are around the ocean. We can warn others and a few team mates also saved others because of our training.

The challenge I’ve seen is that because it’s not a sport, teams struggle to fundraise and find coaches. Also we don’t get a lot of choices for surf spots because of permitting. Having more support by the DOE would help to make our season better.

Surfing is more than just a high school sport and more than just a contest. It connects me and others to the Hawaiian culture, history, and the ocean, and I appreciate it more but also I’m more aware of safety and caring for the ocean and beach. It’s also good for my wellbeing and provides awareness to the industry and career opportunities.

My school is celebrating its 100th year and looking through history, in 1999 students like me had the same hope for their surf club to become part of the OIA. Over 25-years later, students are still dreaming of the same thing!

By passing HB133 it is a step forward in making high school surfing (Shortboard, bodyboard, longboard) a recognized sport with resources. Investing in us and giving us an opportunity to

connect our passion to our school, expose us to career opportunities, and create ocean stewards that embrace culture and history now and for a lifetime. Your support and resources matter and will make a difference! You can see high school surfing in action by visiting our Instagram @mules_surfteam.

Mahalo - Kylie

LHS, Mules Surf Team Captain

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 6:59:00 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charme Taksony	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai, my name is Charme Taksony and I am speaking in support of bill HB133 to fund high school surfing for the state. As a high school teacher at Maui Higi School and as a parent of a high school student, I see the benefit of providing opportunities for our keiki to participate in sports. Our island of Maui has a successful surfing league and it has brought years of positive experiences and aloha to the students and the community. Funding surfing as a high school sport for the entire state will give many more students on every island an opportunity to participate in surfing as a high school sport. The benefits are many, the negatives, I feel, are not a good reason to prevent surfing from being a high school sport. Besides liability and money, what are the reasons for not funding this bill? All high school sports have risks, all of them require a lot of money. Why is surfing not a high school sport in the state where surfing originated? I humbly ask that you pass this bill and fund surfing as a high school sport for the state of Hawaii. Please feel free to email me or call me, I will attach my contact information to this testimony.
Me ke aloha

Charme Taksony

8082831109

20280942@k12.hi.us

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:49:55 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cody Lew Rose	Waialua surf team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Cody Rose and I strongly support making surfing an official high school sport. Surfing is a physically demanding and mentally challenging sport that promotes fitness, discipline, and respect for the environment. It provides an alternative for students who may not participate in traditional sports while fostering resilience, teamwork, and personal growth.

With existing competitive platforms like the NSSA and HSA Surfing, adding surfing to high school athletics would create new opportunities for student-athletes, including scholarships and career pathways. Communities already embrace the sport, and formal recognition would give students the chance to compete and excel while representing their schools.

As Hawai'i is the birthplace of surfing it only makes sense and I urge you to support this initiative and help expand athletic opportunities for all students. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cody Lew Rose

Waialua Surf Team

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:49:28 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeff Smith	HP Baldwin Highschool	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have been a head coach for HP Baldwin Highschool for the past three seasons. I can honestly say the high school surf season not only is my favorite several months of the year but also the students and families alike. Even the schools faculty admit every time they come to support that theyve never experimnced such a beautiful day. We all compete with passion but embrace one another as a community. Myself and other coaches have happily geared up, waxed surf boards and done whatever is necessary for opposing schools to get their athletes in the water in time. Not because we are not competitive and but we want every kid to feel the support of the community in every contest as well as a brother or sister in the water.

My team this past season was invited to the Honua World cup of Surfing hosted by Iolani. We are a solid surf team but my kids don't come from a lifetime of coachers or competitive mindset for a international contest. But our team brought more heart and aloha than anyone could have imagined. We cheered hard for our team but we equally cheered hard for every athlete from every community traveling to Oahu to compete. It's memories that will never leave my team both coaches and students memories ever.

Having a sanctioned Interscholastic team has been nothing but a blessing for each family that signs up. Its a league for all levels. We've taught kids how to surf, swim and on my team how to save lives with mandated CPR/AED certifications.

You really are missing an opportunity to showcase a hawaiian invented sport that is the highlight of the Olymipcs, the only action sport that is gaining growth year over year and embracing the culture of Hawai'i.

The money you speak of needed is nothing. You know its nothing and the league doesnt need as much as said.. As a head coach, i do not need a salary. I do this for the love. I do it for the kid that feels accepted, the kid that connects. that kid that works their butts off to maintain the grades that i hold them to.. My team, is all CPR certified again as of February 4th when i have my course again hosted by my schools athletic trainers..

The money yu claim necessary to run the league is absolutley nothong. A mere tax credit can cover any of these wild expenses yu believe exist.. Start investing in our youth

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:52:23 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anthony Kelling	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Anthony Kaipō‘i Kelling and I am one of the surf coaches at Ke Kula ‘o Samuel M. Kamakau L.P.C.S. I am writing in support of HB133 due to Hawaii being the birth place of surfing and allowing our children to partake in this cultural practice is one of life’s greatest privillages. I have personally seen the growth of our students in their capacity to be great ambassadors to the culture and even greater role models for our nation. Surfing provides opportunitites and teachable moments that shape and develop the character of our youth. It is also a great outlet that leads to positive and healthy choices and lifestyle.

I urge you to support this appropriation as it will encourage our keiki to be proud and share their culture through this sport of kings. This can be a positive step for them to join the international field that makes our cultural practice a global phenomenon. And who would be better to represent this platform but our own keiki.

Mahalo for taking the time to listen,

Anthony Kaipō‘i Kelling

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:52:59 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hayden carranza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a public school student of Kaiser high school currently in the surf club and I support the sport of surfing becoming something apart of the doe and being a team sport.



Ke Kula 'o Samuel M. Kamakau, LPCS
45-037 Kāne'ōhe Bay Dr. Kāne'ōhe. HI 96744
Phone: (808) 235-9175; Fax: (808) 235-9173

“E mālama 'ia ana ka mauili ola o kākou mai kēlā hanauna a i kēia hanauna.”

HB133
Relating to Surfing
House Committee on Culture and Arts
January 29, 2025
10:30 AM

Date: January 29, 2025
Subject: Testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of House Bill 133: Relating to Surfing

Aloha mai kākou e nā Luna o Ke Kōmike of Culture and Arts,

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB133 Relating to Surfing, which proposes to appropriate funds to the department of education to support the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport.

As surfing originated in Hawai'i and is a traditional cultural practice, our students and their families have advocated to participate in surfing at our Hawaiian Medium Charter School. Over these past two years of competing, I have watched them grow in significant ways- increased physical fitness, earned their junior lifeguard certification and skills in water safety, increased self-identity and strengthened their connection to culture, Hawaiian language and 'āina as they learned the traditional names of surf sites along with various mo'olelo (stories).

Within these past two years, school and student interest in surfing have grown from 11 (6 public schools) competing high schools in 2023-2024 to 15 (9 public schools) in this current school year. We believe that all students in Hawai'i should be offered the opportunity to compete in a sport, especially one that originated in Hawai'i. I urge you to pass HB133 to appropriate funds to the department of education to establish surfing as an interscholastic sport.

Mahalo for your careful consideration.

'Oia ihola nō me ke aloha,

I. Meahilahila Kelling, Ed.D.
Director

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:11:41 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sanoe Kazama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Surfing was born in Hawai'i, yet it is still not a funded sport in high schools statewide. Surfing is offered as a club sport in only a handful of schools, preventing students from experiencing the pride of representing their schools and the joy of building lifelong memories with teammates.

Besides holding immense cultural significance in Hawai'i, surfing provides a much needed study break for students' mental health, disconnecting us from stressors, releasing mood-improving endorphins, and connecting us to Mother Nature. Surfing is also a wonder for physical health, as it's a full body workout that incorporates cardio, strength training, and muscle building all at once. It is a sport that improves the health, both physical and mental, of our students, and connects them to a supportive community like no other. The ocean truly has no boundaries, and the sport of surfing brings people together from all walks of life for the same purpose--to catch a great wave. Everyone in a lineup shares the same stoke as you, cheering you on when you catch a wave, offering guidance to improve on a turn or carve, or just sharing their aloha and knowledge as you talk story with them. One can't help but feel surrounded with aloha as they surf, especially while surfing in a lineup of people who share the same love for the ocean.

I ask the State of Hawai'i to allocate funds so that every high school student statewide has the opportunity to represent their school with pride and reap the numerous benefits of surfing: physically, mentally, and community-wise.

Mahalo for your time!

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:13:04 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Averie Hong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I think that we need to pass this bill HB133 to make surfing an official OIA sport because lots of people including me love to surf and would love to represent their school. Hawaii is the birthplace of surfing so why isn't surfing a school sport already? We need support from the government.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:13:04 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Balazs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support surfing being included among all the sports our keiki enjoy from when theyre toddlers to when they become kupuna. Surfing and wave-riding is a piece of culture that has blossomed and become a worldwide phenomenon, now even being included in the Olympics. The time is here to move us forward.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:43:08 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lyndee Sprenger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB133, which appropriates funds to the Department of Education to establish surfing as an interscholastic sport in Hawaii.

Surfing, known as "he'e nalu" or "wave sliding" in Hawaiian, is not just a sport but a fundamental part of Hawaii's cultural heritage.[9] With its roots tracing back to ancient Polynesian cave paintings, surfing was brought to the Hawaiian islands by our ancestors, making it an integral part of our history and identity.[9]

The global recognition of surfing as an Olympic sport, debuting in the Tokyo 2020 Games and continuing in Paris 2024 and LA 2028, underscores its significance on the world stage.[2] Hawaii's own Carissa Moore brought home the gold medal in surfing's Olympic debut, showcasing the talent nurtured by our islands.[2] By establishing surfing as an interscholastic sport, we are not only honoring our cultural legacy but also preparing our youth to excel on a global platform.

While Hawaii made surfing a high school sport in 2004, only 13 campuses have formed official teams since then. Most schools have surf clubs that meet after school, overseen by volunteer coaches.[4] This bill would provide the necessary funding to expand these programs and create official teams, giving more students the opportunity to participate in this culturally significant sport.

Surfing is more than just a physical activity for Hawaiians; it has deep societal implications and spiritual connections.[9] By teaching our high school students the art of surfing, we are not only imparting valuable skills but also instilling in them a profound respect for the ocean and our cultural heritage. This education goes beyond the waves, helping to shape well-rounded individuals who understand the importance of balance, patience, and respect for nature.

Supporting this bill means investing in our youth and our culture. By establishing surfing as an interscholastic sport, we are:

1. Preserving and promoting our unique cultural heritage
2. Developing skilled athletes who can represent Hawaii on the world stage

3. Teaching important life skills such as discipline, respect for nature, and teamwork
4. Creating a stronger connection between our youth and the ocean that surrounds us

As Ha'a Keaulana, a young Hawaiian surfer, eloquently stated, "[Surfing is] our church, because that's where we spiritually can connect to something that was always there as native Hawaiians. I feel connected to my ancestors. I feel connected to my culture." [3] By supporting this bill, we are nurturing this connection for future generations.

In conclusion, HB133 is not just about funding a sport; it's about investing in our cultural identity, our youth, and our future. By establishing surfing as an interscholastic sport, we are building a foundation for student-athletes who will become proud ambassadors of Hawaii, carrying our values and traditions wherever they go in life. I urge you to support this bill and help us ride the wave towards a brighter future for our keiki and our islands.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Lyndee Sprenger

Maui Preparatory Surf Team Coach 2022-2025

Citations:

[1] <https://www.billtrack50.com/legislatordetail/21295>

[2] <https://www.nbcolympics.com/news/surfing-101-olympic-history-and-results>

[3] <https://abcnews.go.com/US/new-wave-hawaiian-surfers-reclaim-sports-cultural-spirit/story?id=99725127>

[4] <https://www.civilbeat.org/2024/09/high-school-surfing-is-a-thing-in-hawaii-but-not-as-much-as-you-might-think/>

[5] <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/Organization/Budget/Pages/operating-budget.aspx>

[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surfing_at_the_2024_Summer_Olympics

[7] <https://summertimesurf.com/blog/hawaiian-culture/>

[8] <https://trackbill.com/bill/hawaii-senate-bill-178-doe-surfing-appropriation/2598706/>

[9] <https://www.pacificsurf.com/history-of-surfing-in-hawaii/>

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:49:33 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jurrien Kelling	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I am Jurrien Kelling and I am an assistant coach for Samuel Kamakau surf team. I support this bill because surfing is a Hawaiian sport. It also allows us to teach the kids ocean safety and to look out for each other.

Mahalo

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:02:11 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Davin Kanana Kelling	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Davin Kānanaikawaiola Kelling and I am a senior at Ke Kula ‘o Samuel M. Kamakau, Laboratory Public Charter School. I am in strong support of HB133, which proposes to appropriate funds to the department of education to support the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport. I am fortunate to have participated in high school surfing on the Kamakau surf club over these past two years and believe every student should have this same opportunity in their own schools.

As Hawai‘i is the home of surfing and continues to host many professional surf competitions attracting international attention, I don’t understand why surfing is not yet a sanctioned sport in the high schools. For students at Kamakau, surfing is not just a sport. Our surf club is taking advantage of this opportunity to reclaim surfing as a Hawaiian cultural practice. We are learning through the eyes of our kupuna as mo‘olelo are shared with us of this traditional cultural practice and as we learn of the traditional names and stories of surf spots across O‘ahu. I have also appreciated the opportunity to connect and interact with other student surfers across O‘ahu at the competitions.

Student safety is addressed with all students being required to earn their Jr lifeguard certification and coaches are required to become lifeguard certified. We are carefully watched during practices with multiple coaches available to assist.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify and for your consideration.

Mahalo,

D. Kananaikawaiola Kelling

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:02:26 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maggie Hong	Kaiser High School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in full favor of passing HB133 to establish surfing as an interscholastic sport. My daughter is a member of Kaiser's High School's inaugural surf club. And to support her and her love for the sport, I volunteered to be chair of fundraising because this is the biggest obstacle we face. \$3100 is a tremendously steep bill for 8 participating athletes to fundraise all by themselves without financial support from the school or the DOE. I was extremely disappointed to learn that Superintendent Keith Hiyashi rejected the roughly \$40,000 allocation the legislature had approved to fund all the public schools' surf clubs. While the ocean poses unpredictable conditions, our keiki who want to surf competitively are comfortable in the ocean and their risk for injury is no greater than high-contact interscholastic sports like football or basketball?! Moreover, Mr. Hiyashi's requirement that all surfers receive junior lifeguard certification should demonstrate the surfers' level of competence and comfort in the ocean. Surfing is part of our Hawaiian culture and should be embraced and sponsored as such by the state government. Surf clubs operate like a competitive team and should be given the same status as other competitive sports. It is a shame that HIDOE does not sponsor the sport that is native to our ancestors and that continues to bring worldwide attention, culture, and money to our island chain. Make this official already! Fund our surfing athletes!

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:11:30 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane McCallister	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I am a public school teacher at Kaiser High School. I am also a very average surfer who appreciates that not every child is going to be sponsored or go pro. For exactly that reason, surfing should be fully sanctioned, fully funded and fully supported as an inter scholastic sport in Hawaii.

I moved to Hawaii from California several years ago. My son, avid surfer, competed on his public school team in *middle school*. That's right, California (at least on the coasts) supports surfing, not only at the high school level, but in middle school. When we moved to Hawaii, which is where surfing was born (and is such an integral part of the culture), he was devastated to give up competing for his school team.

Here's the thing with surfing: when young people are in the water, they cannot get into any mischief. They are off their phones, away from bad influences, and partaking of the goodness of fresh air and exercise. The bumper sticker says that salt water heals. There is truth in that maxim.

Aa teacher and Kaiser Surf Club advisor, I want my student athletes to have the opportunities that my own son was denied: Give the watermen (and water women) a chance to compete for their schools. Take away the onerous fundraising. Support these student athletes. There are groms all over these islands who need this. There are surfers and bodyboarders who cannot afford entry fees to contests. There are kids from places besides the north shore who can legitimately surf and could be competitive on the world stage--if they had the chance to grow their craft. There are average surfers like me who might have gotten better, and at the very least they could have had fun on a team.

Chance 'em! Full send! Toes on the nose! Let the kids surf!

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:11:56 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Preston Merrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support HB133, which seeks to recognize surfing as an officially sanctioned sport under the Hawaii DOE. As the birthplace of surfing and a state where wave riding is deeply embedded in our culture and history, it is only fitting that we elevate surfing to the same status as other high school sports like football, basketball, and volleyball.

Surfing is more than just a pastime in Hawaii, it is an athletic discipline that demands skill, discipline, and perseverance. Many of our young athletes already dedicate themselves to competitive surfing, often balancing training and competition without the same support and recognition provided to student-athletes in DOE-sanctioned sports. By formally incorporating surfing into DOE athletics, we provide structured opportunities for student participation, pathways to scholarships and professional careers, and a greater sense of belonging for students who excel in the sport.

Additionally, surfing as a sanctioned sport aligns with Hawaii's values and unique geography. Unlike mainland sports that require costly travel, specialized facilities, or land-intensive infrastructure, our natural environment provides the perfect venue. Surfing fosters not only athleticism but also ocean safety awareness, environmental stewardship, and cultural appreciation, reinforcing the very identity of our islands.

By passing HB133, we invest in our youth, our culture, and our future. Surfing deserves the same level of support and legitimacy as other DOE sports, and our student-athletes deserve access to structured competitions, coaching resources, and academic-athletic balance that an official designation would bring.

I urge you to pass HB133 and give Hawaii's young surfers the recognition and support they have long deserved.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Preston Merrell

Honolulu, HI

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:14:42 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Schiffner	Kaiser High School Surf Club/Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Hawai'i State Legislators,

I am writing in support of HB133. I am a Hawaii State educator of over 20 years and a parent of two Hawaii DOE students. Both of my daughters are competitive surfers and have participated in surf contests all over Oahu and Nationally. Surfing is synonymous with Hawaii and Hawaii surfers have dominated the professional world of surfing for many years. There are many professional opportunities in surfing in and out of the water. Surfing is a billion dollar industry. In 2022 the global surfing industry was valued at \$4 billion and is expected to continue to grow. Investing in the next generation of surfers is a smart move for Hawaii. One of the most revered historical figures from contemporary Hawaii is Duke Kahanamoku, the father of surfing. Most recently Hawai'i's Carissa Moore won the Olympic gold medal in surfing. Oahu is also the home to the most revered surfing spots in the world. To not have surfing as an interscholastic sport under the DOE is a disgrace to the birthplace of surfing and a disservice to students. Scholastic surfing is already in place in many coastal states across the US. People across our state and the US mainland are completely shocked when they learn Hawaii DOE does not have surfing as an interscholastic sport. Hawaii is the world leader in surfing and there is no other sport that Hawaii has such significance over. Surfing as a high school sport provides access for many high school surfers to experience the same developmental benefits and opportunities as their peers who play other sports. It is an access and equity issue. My oldest daughter is the President of the Kaiser High School Surf Club, and a member of the Kaiser High School Swim Team and Water Polo Team. There is great disparity between her access, support and development as a surfer on the high school surf club team versus her experiences on the Swim and Water Polo team. This disparity between surfing and other high school sports should not exist, and especially not in Hawaii. Passing HB133 is the right thing to do. It is something for the entire state to celebrate. Surfing is a youth sport, growing college sport, olympic sport and professional sport. Hawaii high school surfers deserve to be included as student athletes and access the same resources as their peers. It is with great conviction that I support HB133.

Sincerely,

Amy Schiffner

DOE parent and Kaiser Surf Club volunteer

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:17:11 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Spencer Suitt	Waiialua High School Surf Team/Club	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Spencer Suitt- I'm one of the acting Surf Coach's with the Waiialua High School Surf Team/Club. On behalf of our 21 team/club members, I'm writing in support of getting the DOE to recognize and make surfing an official OIA high school sport.

Founded in 1940, the OIA mission statement talks about educational and cultural values, and surfing has to be the most cultural sport in Hawai'i, along with being educational in the sense of learning all about the ocean. Not to mention, surfing as a sport probably brings in the most money to Hawai'i's economy. And 85 years after the OIA was formed, surfing is still not recognized as a high school sport...

Surfing fosters discipline, resilience, and respect for nature. The sport teaches students to be patient, adaptable, as conditions in the ocean constantly change. Learning to navigate these challenges builds life skills that extend beyond the ocean. Surfing instills a deep appreciation for the environment, encouraging young athletes to become stewards of the ocean and their local ecosystems.

Offering surfing as a high school sport increases inclusivity and engagement. Not all students are drawn to traditional team sports like football or basketball, and providing surfing as an option allows a broader range of students to participate in school athletics.

Many coastal communities throughout the mainland U.S. and Australia have formalized competitive high school surfing teams that compete regionally with a chance to qualify to compete in a national level championship. Organizations like the National Scholastic Surfing Association (NSSA) and USA Surfing, provide competitive platforms, and integrating surfing into high schools would create a natural progression for student-athletes to advance in the sport.

Making surfing a high school sport can open up new opportunities for student-athletes, including scholarships, sponsorships, and pathways to collegiate, olympic and professional careers.

I urge you to support the inclusion of surfing as an official high school sport. By doing so, we will be fostering a healthier, more diverse, and environmentally conscious generation of student-athletes.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:47:46 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Monahan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I whole heartedly support HB133 to establish surfing in schools and give it the financial support it needs. I grew up surfing Waikiki and competed at an amateur level and then went on to surf professionally in longboarding. I always wished there was an opportunity to represent my school (Kaiser HS c/o 2003) and also my state at the national level in the high school divisions. By passing this bill you will be supporting the students by helping them be able to focus on improving their skills instead of wasting time trying to fundraise to pay for the next event. It's about time the birthplace of surfing recognizes it as a sport in schools and gets the funding it deserves.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 11:19:21 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Trenton Fong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We live in Hawaii and the sport of surfing started here with the native Hawaiians. As a Hawaiian, I believe surfing should be a sanctioned sport in our DOE system. How ridiculous is it that we could make a list of Hawai'i, DOE, sanctioned sports that includes tennis, soccer, basketball and the list does not include surfing? We exclude the one sport that started here and is what makes our State unique? Come on, this is not a difficult decision.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 11:54:24 PM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Ahumada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge the DOE to support and recognize surfing as an interscholastic sport here in Hawaii. The benefits of after school sports are widely recognized and accepted and I feel that our youth deserve to be supported and mentored in as many positive, active, healthy, and structured activities as possible. Making surfing available at the public school level gives opportunities to students to grow their abilities, be supported in their aspirations and to be mentored in positive ways.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 3:09:28 AM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Davin Kazama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my SUPPORT OF HB133.

We all know the benefit of high school sports and the community that it breeds. The pride that kids feel from representing their schools, playing with, against, and in front of family and friends...that community is what makes sports so critical in the development of our youth today.

We all know that Hawaiians invented surfing and were once banished from participating in it. There is no sport more engrained in Hawaii's culture, and yet has been actively excluded from Hawaii's list of high school sports.

What we might not know, however, is that because surfing is not an interscholastic sport in Hawaii:

1. Surfers are ineligible for numerous international, national, and local scholarships, including the prestigious HMSA Kaimana Awards & Scholarship Program which has granted higher education funds to Hawaii High School Athletic Association athletes for 20 years. \$100,000 will be granted this year, and not a single dollar will or has ever been received by an HHSAA surfer/athlete, because there is no such thing.

2. Surfers are not viewed as student-athletes on their college applications. They are simply viewed as students, hurting their college options and chances of admission.

3. With no team option, many surfers forsake in-person schooling. These students do their schooling and training individually, separating themselves from their classmates and peers. This isolation and individualism works well for some, but less so for others.

There is a way forward, though. Let's commit to finding a way to get this done. Together, let's put in the work to create opportunities. The passage of HB133 is a necessary step to providing our community with what it's been wanting for decades. Surfing as an HHSAA sport is a dream that is well within our reach and it starts with HB133. Let's do this.

Thank you,

Davin Kazama

P.S. I understand that there is concern over the cost of a surf contest, estimated at \$4,350, versus \$1,800 for a football game. I'd like to respectfully point out that a surf contest features 12 teams (\$362.50 per team, per contest) whereas a football game features 2 teams (\$900 per team, per game). In other words, a surf contest is 60% more cost effective per team, per game. Thank you.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 3:40:47 AM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
W. Richard Abelmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for Hawaii Bill HB133 “ Protecting and Promoting Surfing

As a lifelong surfer, part of a family that surfs, and a strong supporter of keiki athletics, I wholeheartedly support HB133. Surfing isn't just a pastime in Hawaii- it s a way of life, a cultural tradition passed down through generations, and a vital part of our identity. Whether it's dawn patrol sessions with family, cheering on the next generation of groms, or simply finding peace in the ocean, surfing shapes who we are.

This bill is about more than waves - it's about ensuring that surfing remains accessible, protected, and respected as a foundational piece of our community. Surfing keeps our kids active, teaches them discipline and resilience, and connects them to the natural world in a way no other sport can. It fosters a sense of respect ”not just for the ocean, but for the people who share it.

By passing HB133, we are committing to preserving the surf breaks that have shaped our history and continue to define our future. We are supporting our keiki in their athletic journeys, backing our local surf industry, and safeguarding the cultural heartbeat of our islands.

I urge lawmakers to recognize the significance of this bill and stand with the surfing community. Let's protect the waves that give us so much, ensuring they remain open, accessible, and thriving for generations to come.

Mahalo for your time and consideration!

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:05:19 AM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Trenton McCullough	Kahuku High School Surf Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in strong support of HB 133 RELATING TO SURFING. This legislation is crucial for the continued growth and development of high school surfing in Hawaii, the birthplace of this incredible sport.

As the head coach of the Kahuku High School Surf Team, I witness firsthand the positive impact surfing has on our students. It fosters discipline, teamwork, respect for the ocean, and a healthy lifestyle. However, competing at a high level requires contests and fees, including:

- **Contest entry fees:** Participation in competitions often involves entry fees.
- With 17 schools participating the funds from each contest will go to support all the schools and students each weekend.

Funding support through HB 133 would be invaluable in alleviating these financial burdens and ensuring that all high school surf teams, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have the opportunity to compete at the highest level.

Hawaii, the birthplace of surfing, has a rich cultural and historical connection to the sport. It is imperative that we continue to nurture and support the growth of high school surfing within our state. By providing adequate funding and resources, we can ensure that future generations of Hawaiian athletes have the opportunity to excel in this unique and challenging sport. It is also a common practice in other states like California and Florida.

Furthermore, I want to emphasize that all necessary safety measures are in place for high school surfing competitions. We adhere to strict safety protocols, including:

- **Experienced lifeguards and water safety personnel:** Highly trained professionals are always on duty to ensure the safety of all participants.
- **Clear and communicated safety rules:** All athletes are thoroughly briefed on safety procedures before each competition.
- **All student and adult participants are Lifeguard and Open Ocean Safety Certified:** Safety equipment is regularly inspected and maintained to ensure optimal performance and safety.

The North Shore community, our school leadership, and our student body wholeheartedly support the development of our high school surf team. This legislation aligns perfectly with our

shared vision of promoting a healthy and active lifestyle for our youth while honoring the rich surfing heritage of Hawaii.

I urge the members of this committee to support HB 133 RELATING TO SURFING. This legislation will not only benefit our student-athletes but also contribute to the continued growth and prosperity of surfing in the state of Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Trenton Mccullough

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:22:03 AM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackson Thomas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support surfing as a school sport as it will bring the schools here in Hawaii together and bring unity, strength, and diversity in the sports that we can have. It should be an official sport and also is benneficial as it is accesible for boys and girls and its a way to connect with the ocean and beautiful island we live here on.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:24:18 AM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
micah ahyou	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Surfing isnt just a hobby in Hawaii it is a way of life. For many of us, the ocean is our second home, where we push our limits, find peace, and chase our dreams. Yet, despite Hawaii being the birthplace of surfing, the sport is still not officially recognized in high school athletics. This needs to change.

Imagine the opportunities that could come from making surfing an official high school sport. Right now, young surfers in Hawaii have to juggle school, training, and competitions on their own, without the same support given to football, basketball, or volleyball players. But surfing is just as demanding physically, mentally, and emotionally. It requires discipline, endurance, and an unbreakable connection with the ocean. If recognized as a school sport, surfing could provide structured coaching, scholarships, and a clear pathway to professional careers, just like other sports do.

For those of us who dream of making it to the World Surf League or representing Hawaii on a global stage, having surfing as a school sport could be life-changing. It would give us the resources, training, and exposure we need to compete at the highest level. More importantly, it would legitimize our passion. Too often, surfing is seen as just a pastime, but for many of us, its our future.

This is more than just a sport its our identity. Its the legacy of Duke Kahanamoku, the spirit of aloha, and the heart of our islands. We deserve the same recognition, the same respect, and the same opportunities as other athletes. If we can play football under Friday night lights, why cant we compete in the waves that have defined our culture for generations?

Its time to make a change. Its time to recognize surfing as an official high school sport in Hawaii. Because for many of us, this isnt just something we do its who we are.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:24:35 AM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Audry Meyers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Support for HB133 “ Surfing in Schools

I am a high school student who is passionate about seeing surfing become an official school-supported activity. I am writing in strong support of Bill HB133, which would provide students with the opportunity to engage in surfing as part of school athletics.

Surfing is more than a sport; it teaches discipline, perseverance, and a deep respect for the environment. It promotes physical and mental well-being and encourages students to connect with nature in a meaningful way. Adding surfing to school programs would also create a more inclusive range of activities that appeal to a broader group of students, providing alternatives to traditional sports.

As someone who sees the impact extracurricular activities have on students, I believe offering surfing as an option could inspire more students to stay active, develop valuable skills, and build stronger community connections.

Please support HB133 and give students like me the chance to explore new opportunities and thrive both in and out of the water.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:27:16 AM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Silver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This program gives much needed support by funding, structure, and exposure. Surfing as a sport has progressed to the olympic platform, as Hawaii is the birthplace of surfing, we should help set an organized environment for the sports acknowledgement and growth. I greatly support this measure and thank you for your consideration.

-

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:27:23 AM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steven Thobe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Steven Thobe and I have been Coaching young people from the ages of 6-26 for over 20 + years. Mostly in baseball. When I moved back to Maui in 2021 after the pandemic I saw that Seabury Hall was hiring a a head surfing coach. I thought to myself well I have been surfing for 40 years and Coaching Baseball for 20 years so hey why not. That first season was a real eye opening experience for me in the most positive way. As Archie Kalepa says we are trying to build good stewards of our Ocean. These Young people are the future of our civilization and the Oceans are what connects everyone in the World. As the years went on over the course of two three and now this my fourth year as head coach I see tremendous growth in our Spartan Surfing Seniors. Here are two examples. Sachi as a Freshman was so intimidated by being the number one seed by her own fears of how good everyone else was that it paralyzed her for a moment. We had a chat and she was able to put aside that fear and surf with those girls. When she came out it was so so empowering for her! Last year she was out in double overhead waves and was not only surviving but THRIVING! The same goes true for her classmate Sage who is a multi sport athlete. Sage just started surfing as a freshman and was wide eyed and eager to learn. He was full of curiosity and willingness to learn the ways of the Ocean. My coaching staff and I were able to help with his Ocean Knowledge and now he like Sachi is thriving in bigger surf and has taken to Wing Foiling and has a tremendous love of the ocean.

In closing this MIL Surf Season is a beacon of hope for the rest of the state and what many kids can be empowered by is our Ocean. It's the sport of Hawaii and what a gift to have Duke smiling down and looking over all of us smiling, laughing and being more stoked than ever! Please consider this as a sport for the Hawaiian High Schools over the State.

Mahalos and so much Aloha

Steve Thobe

Head Coach Spartan Surfing

Seabury Hall

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:28:13 AM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noah Fauatea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Surfing builds a strong sense of community, encouraging teamwork and camaraderie among students. It also provides an inclusive opportunity for students who may not connect with mainstream sports like football or basketball. Many coastal schools already have access to the ocean, making surfing a practical and enriching addition to athletic programs.

By making surfing a school sport, we can offer students a unique, challenging, and rewarding athletic experience while promoting a healthy and active lifestyle. It's time to ride the wave of progress and bring surfing into our schools!

HB-133

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:30:54 AM

Testimony for CAA on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aaron Ward	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB133, which seeks to recognize surfing as an interscholastic sport in Hawaii. Surfing is deeply embedded in Hawaiian culture and history, dating back centuries as a practice of Native Hawaiians and later becoming a global phenomenon. Given its cultural significance and the abundance of world-class waves in Hawaii, it is only fitting that our students have the opportunity to compete in surfing at the high school level, just as they do in football, volleyball, and other traditional sports. By officially sanctioning surfing as an interscholastic sport, we honor our heritage while providing students with an opportunity to engage in a sport that is both physically and mentally enriching.

Beyond its cultural relevance, surfing offers numerous benefits to student-athletes. It promotes physical fitness, discipline, and perseverance, all of which are essential skills for success both in and out of the water. Additionally, surfing fosters a deep connection with nature and environmental stewardship, encouraging young athletes to care for the ocean and their surroundings. Many students already participate in surfing recreationally or through local competitions, and integrating it into school athletics would provide structure, coaching, and opportunities that could open doors for future careers in professional surfing, coaching, or ocean-related fields.

HB133 is an important step in recognizing the unique strengths of Hawaii's students and the sports that define our islands. Establishing surfing as an interscholastic sport would create equitable opportunities for student-athletes to excel in a sport that is deeply tied to our identity. It would also help level the playing field for those who may not have the resources to compete in private or club competitions. By passing this bill, we invest in our students, our culture, and our future as the birthplace of modern surfing. I urge lawmakers to support HB133 and give Hawaii's youth the opportunity to thrive in a sport that is truly their own. Mahalo for your consideration!