

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



EDWIN H. SNIFFEN  
DIRECTOR  
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Deputy Directors  
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele  
DREANALEE K. KALILI  
TAMMY L. LEE  
CURT T. OTAGURO  
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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

March 11, 2025  
3:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Room 224

**H.B. 862, H.D. 1**  
**RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

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Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) **supports H.B. 862, H.D. 1**, which authorizes the use of motorcoaches, small buses, and vans for school bus services if certain conditions are met.

The HDOT supports this measure to meet the needs of students who need transportation to and from school.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING  
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543  
March 11, 2025

The Honorable Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts  
The Thirty-Third Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawai'i  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Lee, and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB862 HD1 Relating to Transportation Services

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **strongly supports HB862 HD1**, which expands school transportation options by authorizing the use of motorcoaches, small buses, and vans for school services, provided they meet specific conditions.

Reliable and accessible school transportation is essential for students with developmental disabilities, many of whom rely on these services to attend school. For students who use wheelchairs, accessibility features such as lifts and securement systems are not just beneficial—they are necessary to ensure equitable access to education.

We appreciate the effort to address the school bus shortage by broadening transportation options. However, we urge thoughtful implementation to ensure that some of these newly authorized vehicles are designed to accommodate students with diverse mobility needs. Expanding transportation without including accessible options could inadvertently exclude students who depend on these features.

To uphold our commitment to inclusivity, we respectfully request that the bill include provisions requiring a portion of the new vehicles to be accessible to all students, including those with disabilities. By doing so, we can ensure that every student benefits from these improvements.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of HB862 HD1**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus  
Executive Administrator

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:** 03/11/2025

**Time:** 03:00 PM

**Location:** CR 224 & Videoconference

**Committee:** Senate Transportation and Culture  
and the Arts

**Department:** Education

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

**Bill Title:** HB 0862, HD1 RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION SERVICES.

**Purpose of Bill:** Authorizes the use of motorcoaches, small buses, and vans for school bus services if certain conditions are met. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 862, HD1.

While the school bus remains one of the safest transportation options for students, the Department recognizes that alternative vehicles, such as motorcoaches and small vans, offer flexibility for home-to-school transportation. These alternatives are being considered nationally, with state oversight to ensure safety requirements and proper implementation.

The Department thanks the Committee for the opportunity to comment on HB 862, HD1.



## **Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization**

### **Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts**

**Date Time: March 11, 2025, 3:00PM**

**Location: Conference Room 224 & via Videoconference  
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street**

### **Measure HB862 RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

Dear Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports HB862**, which authorizes the use of motorcoaches, small buses, and vans for school bus services if certain conditions are met.

There is a nationwide school bus driver shortage affecting Hawaii. While the department of education contracts school bus services to various contractors on multiple islands, driver shortages have resulted in the cancellation, temporary suspension, and consolidation of bus routes. The school bus driver shortage negatively impacts student attendance and causes difficulties for working parents who juggle jobs and school drop-offs, and the State's severe bus driver shortage is felt disproportionately by families living in rural, underserved areas. The department of education has been forced to implement a series of unconventional programs to provide basic transportation for keiki attending public schools in rural, underserved areas. Allowing the transport of students using vehicles other than school vehicles by drivers possessing a commercial driver's license with an endorsement authorizing the driving of vehicles carrying passengers may help alleviate the lack of school bus drivers.

The purpose of this Act is to authorize the use of motorcoaches, small buses, and vans for school bus services; provided certain conditions are met. The OahuMPO recommends the addition of active modes of transportation to be added to this list including bike buses, walking school buses, crossing guard programs, and free access for all students to use the public bus. This is consistent with the goal for transportation on Oahu to be carbon net negative by 2045.

HB862 aligns with the Vision and Goals of the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP), by promoting an equitable and resilient transportation system.

The OahuMPO is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on the island of Oahu responsible for carrying out a multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a long-range (25-year horizon) metropolitan transportation plan, referred to as the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP), which encourages and promotes a safe, efficient, and resilient transportation system that serves the mobility needs of all people and freight (including walkways, bicycles, and transit), fosters economic growth and development, while minimizing fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 CFR 450.300](#)).

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

TESTIMONY OF  
**LARRY S VERAY**

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURAL ARTS

***IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB862 HD1***

**RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

**March 10, 2025**

Aloha, Chair Lee and Vice Chair Inouye and committee members. I am Larry Veray, Chairman for the Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21. I am submitting this testimony representing our board as a whole. Our neighborhood board passed resolutions and outgoing letters to the Department of Education stating our requirement for Pearl City to prevent bus service disruptions for our students. **I am in STRONG SUPPORT OF HB862 HD1.**

Our student bus service for Pearl City requires a strong infrastructure and uninterrupted service. The Department of Education should have high standards and accountability. During the past few years, the DOE could not meet our requirements to pick up all our students in Pearl City. As time passed while they were trying to find and qualify more bus drivers or higher private bus companies, they could have used smaller vehicles where a CDL license was not required for drivers. I ask you to please pass legislation to authorize use of motorcoaches, small buses, and vans to transport students until the DOE can meet the demand with regular school buses.

We should not leave any students behind as we have experienced over the past years of disrupted service and many students having to find their own personal transportation to get to their schools.

**Please approve HB862 HD1. Mahalo!**

*Larry S. Veray*

**HB-862-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:50:50 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By    | Organization                                    | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|-----------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Charmaine Doran | Testifying for Pearl city<br>Neighborhood Board | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

## Comments:

Thank you for considering this measure. Pearl city has struggled with bus service. In particular random and abrupt cancellations and/or the complete lack of service altogether. Several of our Pearl city schools have never had bus service at all and others currently lack adequate bus service for students. The State of Hawaii should be working to expand bus service at schools. This helps. Providing reliable transportation options, like smaller busess, is essential to the success of our students.

Our Board supports this measure and has adopted two resolutions in support of this approach.

We thank Rep LaChica for continuing to advocate for students and parents.



**Testimony in Support for HB862 - Relating to School Bus Services**  
**Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts (TCA)**  
**March 11, 2025**

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Dear Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and members of the TCA committee,  
Mahalo for the opportunity to express **SUPPORT for HB862** which authorizes usage of certain types of vehicles, like motorcoaches, small buses, and vans, to transport students when there are not enough school buses available, provided that safety standards and other criteria are met.

The DOE has been grappling with a critical shortage of school bus drivers since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to significant disruptions in transportation services across the state. Despite efforts such as offering signing bonuses, hosting job fairs, and introducing more flexible schedules, the shortage has persisted. By August 2024, nearly 3,720 public school students were left without transportation due to the suspension of 108 bus routes in Central O‘ahu and East Hawai‘i Island.<sup>1</sup>

In response, the Governor of Hawai‘i issued his first Emergency Proclamation on School Bus Services in August 2024, allowing the use of other vehicles (such as motorcoaches, small buses, and vans) with commercial drivers to fill the gap in school bus services. Six days after the Governor’s first Emergency Proclamation, the DOE announced their partnership with Ground Transportation Inc. and Roberts Hawai‘i, securing additional drivers. These efforts resumed bus services for approximately 1,200 student riders and 23 schools.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, there is still a significant gap in meeting the transportation needs of students across the state.

Limited transportation for students has far reaching impacts, including:

- **Hindered Education Outcomes:** The absence of reliable transportation options for some DOE students has placed an undue burden on families, hindering access to education and exacerbating disparities in academic achievement.
- **Increased Private Vehicle Usage:** Increasingly, students are no longer relying on school buses or public transportation, but private vehicles to travel to/from school (for families who have access to a vehicle). According to the National Household Travel Survey, in 2023, 53 percent of U.S. students got dropped off at school or drove themselves to school, which poses both environmental and safety concerns.<sup>3</sup>
- **Caregiving Transportation Burdens:** The growing reliance on personal vehicles to transport children to school also places a burden on caregivers. Women often bear the primary

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<sup>1</sup> Green, J., “Proclamation, Relating to School Bus Services,” Office of the Governor, Hawai‘i, August 2, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> HNN Staff, “DOE announces 34 previously suspended school bus routes to be restored starting Monday,” Hawaii News Now, August 8, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Federal Highway Administration, “National Household Travel Survey,” 2023.




responsibility for childcare and household duties. Additional transportation duties can be particularly challenging for single-parent households where time and resources are limited.

**To address these issues, it is critical that the DOE permanently authorize the usage of certain types of alternative vehicles, such as motorcoaches, small buses, and vans, to transport students when there are not enough school buses available.** Throughout the country jurisdictions are adapting their school transportation systems to better serve diverse student populations by allowing alternative vehicles for student transport. For example, Arizona permits the use of 11-15 passenger vehicles for regular routes, with increased route mileage eligibility for state funding,<sup>4</sup> while Georgia allows local boards to use smaller vehicles (8 passengers or fewer).<sup>5</sup> Maryland amended previous rigid regulation for school transportation by allowing alternative vehicles, such as taxicabs and commercial coaches.<sup>6</sup> These flexible policies aim to meet the needs of rural or under-resourced areas, where students are less likely to have alternative transportation options.

In summary, diversifying school transportation with vehicles like motorcoaches, small buses, and vans will allow the Hawai'i DOE to better address the mobility needs of students throughout Hawai'i, particularly those who do not have access to consistent or reliable transportation options. Temporary measures have alleviated the school bus shortage but a permanent solution is needed.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



Abbey Seitz

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

Director of Transportation Equity

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<sup>4</sup> Arizona Revised Statutes, "15-925. School transportation; allowable vehicles," February 4, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Georgia General Assembly, "20-2-1076. Alternative vehicles for school buses; limitations on use; requirements; insurance," February 4, 2025.

<sup>6</sup> Code of Maryland Regulations, "Sec. 13a.06.07.11. General Standards," February 4, 2025.



TO: The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair  
The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

FROM: Philip Bossert, Executive Director  
Hawaii Association of Independent Schools

RE: **HB 862 HD1 – RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION SERVICES  
In Strong Support**

DATE: Tuesday, March 11, 2025; 3:00 p.m.  
Conference room 224 & videoconference

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye and Members of the Committee:

My name is Philip Bossert, and I am the Executive Director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS).

The Hawaii Association of Independent Schools is submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 862 HD1, which authorizes the use of motorcoaches, small buses, and vans for school bus services if certain conditions are met.

HAIS represents 100 independent schools across the state, serving more than 33,000 students from diverse communities. Our schools, like public and charter schools, are affected by the ongoing school transportation issue, which has resulted in bus shortages and an insufficient number of qualified drivers. This issue has had a direct and negative impact on student learning and engagement.

The inability to provide reliable transportation has resulted in limiting field trips, extracurricular activities, and other off-campus learning opportunities that are essential for a well-rounded education. Additionally, for many private schools, cost is a significant barrier, and the lack of affordable, flexible transportation options makes it even more challenging to provide students with meaningful learning experiences beyond the classroom.

HB 862 HD1 offers a reasonable and necessary solution by allowing the use of motorcoaches, small buses, and vans under appropriate safety conditions. These expanded options would provide much-needed flexibility for schools and families, ensuring that transportation limitations do not continue to deprive students of vital educational and enrichment opportunities.

We urge you to pass HB 862 HD1 to help mitigate the current transportation challenges facing our schools and students. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Testimony of  
Roy Pfund, President/CEO of Roberts Hawaii  
on  
H.B. 862 HD1 Relating to Transportation  
March 11, 2025  
3:00 p.m. Room 224

phone 808.523.7750  
fax 808.522.7866

Roberts Hawaii, Inc.  
444 Niu Street, Suite 300  
Honolulu, HI 96815

[www.robertshawaii.com](http://www.robertshawaii.com)

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica and Members of the Committee,

My name is Roy Pfund and I submit this testimony on behalf of Roberts Hawaii in strong support of HB862 HD1. As Hawaii's largest transportation provider, we operate school bus services, shuttle and tour operations, ensuring safe, reliable transportation for our keiki, residents, and visitors alike.

HB862 HD1 presents an opportunity to improve school transportation services across the state by allowing the use of motorcoaches, small buses, and vans under appropriate conditions. Given the ongoing driver shortages and increasing demand for flexible transportation options, this bill provides a practical solution to ensure students have reliable and efficient transport to and from school.

**Key Benefits of HB862 HD1:**

1. **Maximizing Existing Resources** – Expanding the allowable vehicle types for student transportation enables the DOE to expand its options of service providers and allows companies to maximize the use of existing vehicles and thereby providing greater student transportation services.
2. **Addressing Driver Shortages** – Recruiting and retaining CDL-certified school bus drivers remains a challenge. Allowing the use of alternative vehicles that do not require the additional CDL-S license for School Bus drivers expands the available driver pool, improves service reliability and helps mitigate workforce shortages.
3. **Ensuring Continuity of Service** – In areas where traditional school buses may not be readily available, this bill provides a flexible, immediate solution to keep student transportation reliable and efficient.

In addition to the above, we strongly believe that any additional vehicles allowed to be used for student transportation should adhere to the same safety standards, and protocols that other school vehicles are held to, thereby ensuring the well-being and safety of our keiki.

By passing HB862 HD1, the Legislature can help transform Hawaii's student transportation service by providing schools with more options, improving reliability, and enhancing efficiency—all while maintaining the safety and service excellence that our community expects.

We appreciate your time and consideration and respectfully urge the passage of HB862 HD1. Mahalo for your leadership in addressing this critical transportation need.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Roy Pfund  
President and CEO

1961 Aamaka Pl.  
Pearl City, HI 96782  
808-462-8356, [dancsmith@rocketmail.com](mailto:dancsmith@rocketmail.com)

March 10, 2025

Committee on Transportation, Culture and the Arts  
The Senate  
The Capitol  
Honolulu, Hawaii

Re: Hearing on HB862, HD1 on March 11, 2025

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members:

I write in strong support of HB862 HD1 that will allow the use of small buses and vans for student transportation. Legislation will replace emergency orders by the Governor and enlarge the pool of drivers. It is appropriate that the smaller, but adequate, vehicles will not require CDL-S licensed drivers.

I hope that Increased choice of vehicles will also increase creativity in meeting the needs of students, for example, shuttles to TheBus where regular school buses are not available.

Please pass HB862 HD1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel C. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daniel C. Smith

**HB-862-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:54:19 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify              |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Kaili Swan   | Individual   | Support            | Remotely Via<br>Zoom |

Comments:

I am in strong support of this measure beacuse people with with disabilities need affordable transportation to get to place to place without any issues that they may have please pass this bill thank you.

**HB-862-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 10:01:22 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Ellen Awai   | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I support HB862.HD1. As a former transportation employee and setting up motorcoaches and vehicles to pickup transportation through our Dispatch office, I know this is a more efficient process. Transportation can be "farmed out" to vehicles in the area, instead of wasting time and gas sending vehicles far from the pickup point. Mahalo for this bill!

**HB-862-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:40:50 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Larry Smith  | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

This option is needed for safe student transportation.

**HB-862-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:46:02 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By    | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Sarah Fairchild | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I support this measure.



**HB-862-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 11:31:39 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Tony Velasco | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Support this bill for students who needs transportation to and from school.

**HB-862-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 2:13:41 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Claire Pearce | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

Students need transportation to school. I am in favor of vendors who operate small vans, motorcoaches who don't require CDL licenses. In some cases, only a small van can pick up a few students on a narrow road and drive them safely to and from school. A big bus needing a CDL license would not be required all the time. A small van, coach may be able to go to places where a larger bus cannot and do more pickups making it easier for a student to attend school.

**LATE**

**HB-862-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:35:54 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Heide Weber  | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha, I am a 17 year resident of Oahu with a child in elementary and a child in middle school. Although we live within the walkable parameters of one mile for elementary and 1.5 miles for middle and high school, I think it is important to provide transportation for students outside these distances. I fully support adding transit options other than traditional school buses to transport students from home to school. While this legislation is being considered, I suggest adding public transportation options such as The Bus and Skyline on Oahu to the wording as well. Growing up on the mainland, I took it for granted that all schools provided bus service, relied on free public transit for students or subsidized public transit for students. Until writing this testimony, I was not aware that qualifying families even have to pay for school bus service in Hawaii! We need to relax the constraints that serve as obstacles to education; in this case, we need to allow student transportation by means other than traditional school buses. I support HB862 as a first step in providing greater access to education by knocking down the needless barrier of transportation. Thank you.