



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

Date: 03/12/2025

Time: 03:00 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 0133, HD2 RELATING TO SURFING.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education to support the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD2)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) recognizes the intent of HB133 HD2, 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. Interscholastic sports are determined by the Leagues on each island. Thus far, Maui Interscholastic League (MIL) has established surfing as a competitive sport. Conditions are not the same on every island. Any new competitive athletic sport offered in the Department is determined by the respective league associations where it is proposed and approved to ensure conditions are right for students and the school.

On Oahu, surfing has not been proposed by the League, consisting of Athletic Directors and High School Principals. Despite the success MIL has demonstrated, on Oahu there remains concerns about significant risk factors that make surfing difficult for many high schools to sanction. These risks include concerns about accessible and safe surfing areas to conduct practices and the inability to control the practice environment. While the Department appreciates appropriations to support surfing in high school athletic programs, funding would not alleviate these concerns.

If all of the Leagues across the state (43 high schools) decide to establish surfing as a sport, there would be costs for personnel, equipment, operations (including transportation) and fees. The funding required for coach's salaries for both boys and girls surfing would be approximately \$610,084. This would fund a head coach (\$3226/each) and 2 assistant coaches (\$1934 each) for boys and girls. In addition, equipment, operations (including transportation) and fees would need to be determined.

The Department reached out to the surfing community, and was informed that organizing a single surfing competition would cost approximately \$5,800. This amount covers essential expenses such as 2 lifeguards with jet skis, 5 judges, a live scoring operator, beach marshall, announcer, production setup, ratings, life heats, PA system, generators, horn and timing system, set up and breakdown, supplies, and contingency expenses.

The Department requests that any appropriations would not negatively impact the Department's Governor-approved budget.

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



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

3:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

In consideration of

HB 133, HD2

RELATING TO SURFING.

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee on Education:

I'm Keith Amemiya, Chair of the Governor's Sports Task Force and former Executive Director of the Hawaii High School Athletic Association, and I strongly support HB 133, HD2 which appropriates funds to the Department of Education to support the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport statewide beginning in the 2025-26 school year.

Hawaii is the birthplace of surfing, is extremely popular with residents of all ages, and is home to legendary world surfing champions Duke Kahanamoku, Carissa Moore, John John Florence, and many more.

The Hawaii State Board of Education already approved surfing as an official high school sport in 2004. In 2014, the Maui Interscholastic League held its first season where students regularly competed and contended for an official championship. Since that inaugural season, no MIL surfers have sustained any serious injuries during practice or competition.

On Oahu, numerous Oahu Interscholastic Association high schools have adopted surfing as a club sport that requires surfers and coaches to pass rigorous safety requirements before being allowed to participate. To date, no OIA surfers have sustained any serious injuries during practice or competition.

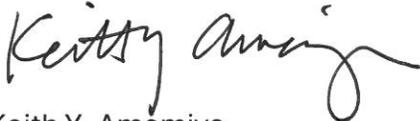
Senate Committee on Education
HB 133, HD2
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The funding of surfing with sanctioned competitions statewide will increase sports participation for both males and females, will increase academic achievement, will increase student and community pride in their schools, will be well received by the general public, and is long overdue.

Based upon the above, I humbly ask for your support and to pass HB 133, HD2.

Please let me know if you have any questions and mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Y. Amemiya". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Keith Y. Amemiya
Chair
Governor's Sports Task Force

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 1:59:01 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Matsuda	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I am Beth Matsuda and I work with the high schools with Surf clubs.

Safety

- We follow all the guidelines that were hovered in in the DOE papers
- All coaches take a mandatory Coaches Ocean Risk Assessment class
- The school writes a Risk Assessment for the beach they use
- We utilize beaches where there is an Ocean Safety Lifeguard
- A minimum of 3 coaches on duty (one as a spotter from the beach,two in the water with the students
- All participants wearing matching rash guards so coaches can differentiate their surfers from other
- All students are required to take Ocean Safety's Jr.Lifeguasd program

The students want the program. Five years ago there were only 4 OIA schools and 6 ILH schools. Today we have 12 OIA schools with 3 more schools joining next year. We have 7 ILH schools currently with nineteen schools interested in joining. The biggest obstacle is financial. The coaches need to pay \$150 for the Coaches Ocean Risk Assessment (I have been paying for the last 4 years. I am currently retired and cannot. Pay the fes anymore. We are not funded by the schools, so each year th students need to fundraiser \$3200+ for competition fees. This cost has been the biggest reason we don't have more OIA schools.

I am in charge of coordinating the Coaches Ocean Risk Assessment class. For students that were not able to get into one of Ocean Safety Jr. Lifeguard program during the summer I set up additional Jr. Lifeguard sessions with approved programs.

Surfing can also influence possible careers

1. Lifeguard

2. Spokesperson

3. Maritime jobs

Mahalo for hearing me out.

LATE

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 6:27:35 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
megan abubo	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee. I stand in support of HB133. I am a former professional surfer and was recognized worldwide and at home for my accomplishments in the surfing world, all of which I attributed to growing up in Hawai'i. I would not be here today if it were not for the wonderful people involved in surfing and the sport itself. Surfing gave me the opportunity to travel the world and spread Aloha, culture, passion, and allowed me to represent my hometown of Waialua. As a proud graduate of Waialua High School, I never understood how and why the world could recognize our artistic and passionate sport and yet our school system could not.

Surfing is a unique sport in that it is a passion and dedication that will last a lifetime. Ask anyone who used to play high school football, wrestling, track, or any other sport if they still participate in that sport at the age of 70. I would be safe to say, they do not. Surfing is culturally, artistically, and athletically individual, however it is also a sport that attracts a unique individual to participate in. Not all students are "land" sports people. I never was, I tried countless sports as I loved athletics. Track, wrestling, tennis, golf, soccer, and none of it was for me. Just like the thousands of other students out there, water sports is what drives them. Surfing, paddling, swimming, and water polo to name a few. Some of us are just straight up more connected with the ocean than the land. I may not be able to make a basket, but I sure can get barreled.

This brings me to the point of opportunities. By not having Surfing as a sport within our public school system, we are taking away opportunities that students may have had. By the time I was as senior in high school, I had been to 6 countries surfing, represented Hawai'i in the U.S. national titles and won 7 different divisions, competed in the world juniors in Brazil while my classroom studied Brazil, and I had had the opportunity to travel to Europe. While I was often times excluded at school, and no one really knew what I did except the other surfers. None of my accomplishments were celebrated and none of my stories shared. There was NO support in the arena which I was proudly representing Hawai'i around the world in.

We had no surf teams, there was no guidance at all of any kind because the school's simply did not accept surfing as a sport. How are we in this same place in 2025? I went to school in the early to mid 90's. How is there no recognition? We are depriving these students of the support they need in the water to thrive on land. I would not be here today if it were not for surfing. I grew up in a very poor household with very little opportunity, that all changed because of surfing. I was told not to take my SAT's, told not to do this not to do that because surfing was a dead end. Surfing is a billion dollar industry and there are many opportunities to set you up, if not in the professional sports world or the industry itself. Surfing is an organized entity and it

should be supported from the grassroots level, through the schools, and onto the professional arena. Surfing in schools gives students the opportunity to represent their high school while participating in the sport they love and are committed to.

Surfing is also pretty easy on the body and that is why so many of us can still participate in surfing well into our 40's, 50's, and post retirement ages. This is a sport that entire families participate and support. How many sports can you name that mom, dad, sister, brother, cousin, aunty, uncle, grandma, grandpa can all enjoy together. Surfing is a safe and healthy sport which should be recognized in our schools.

If funding is an issue, we should not model surfing around professional events, I know first hand professional events have atrocious budgets which include all types of stipulations to run. There are so many ex professional surfers in our many communities thorough out the islands that I'm sure with the proper team around we can have very cost efficient events which give all surfers a sense of pride and accomplishment at the end of the day. If injuries are an issue, I can assure you how many kids get injured playing football? Surfing is a healthy sport which is celebrated in the ocean and gives kids a sense of peace, especially those that may be having difficulties at home. I was one of those kids with a very rough childhood and surfing saved my life.

Surfing to be recognized as a sport, will give all those water keiki the opportunity to showcase their talents while being recognized for their accomplishments, let's give them that sense of place.

Surfing is also the most highly symbolic memory when you think of Hawai'i, besides coconut trees of course. Surfing is synonymous with the islands, and it needs to be acknowledged by our schools, not just on Maui. How can we be surrounded by ocean and not have surfing recognized in our school system. How can somewhere like California claim more support for our native past time? California school system's acknowledge it. I remember going to National titles and asking our coach why we couldn't compete in the high school division. Why couldn't we.

So please don't sit on this for years and years and we see this still sitting here. Look how positive paddling has been for schools. The logistics for paddling are tough too, but it was made possible. All a kid like me needed was a board, a suit, and some wax. Look at the places I went, and imagine that you could give that to someone else. I remember wanting to excel more in school and go to college, instead I was told not to take my SAT's. Why i wondered, oh well I decided to turn pro. However, there are other options out there, scholarships to colleges, avenues in kayaking and other paddling sports.

Please I ask please acknowledge that not all of our keiki want to do land sports, we should include our Hawaiian cultural art of surfing in our school systems and allow these keiki the opportunity they deserve. You never know who's life you are going to change.

Mahalo,

Megan Abubo

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 2:52:52 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kylie	Testifying for Leilehua High School - Mules Surf Team	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha

Thank you Senators for allowing me to testify on HB133. I am excited to see the movement happening with high school surfing this year and thank you for your consideration in passing HB 133.

I am the captain of Leilehua High School’s Surf Team. I started our surf team with my friend last year. When people asked me what sport I was going to do in high school or if I did 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 in 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 an official 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. And we’re constantly struggling to find program providers to meet our lifeguard training. Any help would offset cost, provide us resources, and ensure the safety, fun, and success of our season.

Surfing is more than just a high school sport and more than just a contest. It connects me to the Hawaiian culture, history, and the ocean, and I appreciate it more but also become 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!

I received a lot of support from teachers, staff, and our school admin (see signatures below). I didn't have enough time to get more as we are in finals week. Previously I sent out a campaign and received over 300 supporters: <https://www.change.org/p/support-high-school-surfing-as-an-official-athletic-sport>

You can hear from our team about high school surfing in a feature by K2 (scroll down the page to find the video): <https://www.k2-nho.com/k2-foundation>. You can also check out our surf team and visit our Instagram https://www.instagram.com/mules_surfteam/

By passing HB133 it is a step forward in making high school surfing (shortboard, bodyboard, longboard) a recognized sport and 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. Our sport might be small and there might not be large teams, but surfing is our sport! Your support and resources matter and will make a difference!

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Kylie Sato (Team Captain) and the Mules Surf Team

Liv Koyanagi, Kara Watson, Taj Porec, Zyrrus Alailima, Kaikane Hanoa, Judah Keohokapu, Oren Nelson, Jordan Orillo, Colt Gomersall

Leilehua High School

I SUPPORT H

To appropriate funds to the department of
establishment of surfing as an inte

Rafael Jimura

Rocio Alano

Carl Gregory
Gabe Jr

Justin

John

John

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HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 9:24:54 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Ball	Testifying for Maui Interscholastic League Surfing	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chairman Kidani,

I have been organizing Maui Interscholastic League Surfing since it became an official DOE MIL sport in 2014. Prior to that, I organized high school club surfing for 19 years on Maui. We have proven that this sport is important to our high school sports programs for our student athletes. We had 93 student / athletes representing 12 high schools competing this past Saturday at our season's first contest. We ran 30 heats in 10 divisions, and we had two athletic trainers, and a water safety officer on site. The trainers injury report after 8 1/2 hours of competitive surfing: one small foot cut. We have proven for the past 10 years, that surfing is one of the safest DOE sports. Now it seems the excuse from the DOE is money. That has never been an issue when there has been new sports introduced at the high school level. Obviously if 12 high schools on Maui have surf teams, there is interest state-wide. It's time to rip off the band aid, and fund a sport that has brought so much money to our state.

Respectfully,

Kim Ball

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 8:58:23 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Sanita	Testifying for Hana High and Elementary School	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

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.

LATE

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:51:45 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chrislyn Simpson-Kane	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB133 – Establishing Surfing as an Interscholastic Sport

Aloha Honorable Members of the House/Senate,

My name is **Chrislyn Ko'onohi Sueko Simpson-Kane**, but many people call me **Sissie**. I am a Native Hawaiian competitive surfer, born and raised on the North Shore of Maui in a town called Kuau. I am currently a **Senior at King Kekaulike High School** on the island of Maui. Surfing is more than just a sport to me—it is my heritage, my way of life, and my passion. I started surfing before I could walk, and by the age of 3, I was already competing. Over the years, surfing has shaped me into the person I am today.

I am proud to have earned the title of **Hawaii State Girls 14-15 State Champion**, and I was **ranked 4th in the Nation for Girls Shortboarding in 2022**. I also had the honor of becoming the **youngest female to surf Peahi Jaws**, an iconic big wave spot here in Maui. I have won **two MIL Individual Female Surf Titles** for Kekaulike High School and recently claimed the **inaugural 2024 Honua Interscholastic Finals World Cup** for the Individual Female Surf Division. These experiences have been incredible, but the journey to get here has not been without its challenges.

For most of my life, I was homeschooled so I could focus on competing in surfing. My dedication to the sport meant that I needed the flexibility to train and travel for competitions. However, in 2022, midway through my 10th-grade year, I decided to **fully enroll at King Kekaulike High School**. This decision was largely influenced by my experiences on the **Kekaulike Surf Team**, which I joined in 2021 through my homeschool program, HTA.

Being a part of the surf team was transformative. It wasn't just about surfing—it was about building camaraderie, learning leadership, and connecting with peers who shared my passion. My time with the surf team inspired me to want to experience all the aspects of high school life that I had missed while being homeschooled. I wanted to join the **Student Council**, be a part of the **Paddle Team**, and play on the **girls' Water Polo Team**, which I did and am still currently a part of. I went to prom and am now preparing to graduate with Honors this year. After graduation, I plan to enroll at the **University of Hawai'i at Hilo**, where I intend to double major in **Marine Science and Hawaiian Language**.

Surfing is a sport that was born in Hawai'i. It is a part of our culture, our history, and our identity. As a Native Hawaiian, I am proud to be a part of the lineage of surfers who have shared this sport with the world. However, despite its deep cultural roots here in Hawai'i, surfing is not fully recognized or supported as a high school sport across the state. That is why **HB133 is so critical to the future of surfing in Hawai'i.**

We **need** this bill to pass. We need funding to provide the necessary resources for high school surf teams. We need it for students like me who have dedicated our lives to surfing and are striving to achieve at the highest levels, but lack the resources and support to do so. Surfing requires year-round training, travel, and equipment, all of which come with significant costs. Without proper funding, many students are unable to compete at their full potential.

This bill will not only support current high school surfers but will also help preserve and promote surfing for future generations. **HB133 is a step toward recognizing surfing as a legitimate high school sport** and providing our youth with the opportunities they need to thrive.

Please recognize the importance of passing this bill. **Surfing is Hawai'i's sport**—it is what makes us unique and what continues to draw people from all over the world. By passing HB133, you are investing in our future, in the future of surfing, and in the future of our keiki (children) who deserve to have the resources to pursue their dreams, just like I did.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I humbly ask for your support in passing **HB133** to ensure that surfing is given the recognition, funding, and support it deserves in our schools throughout Hawai'i.

Sincerely,
Chrislyn Ko'onohi Sueko Simpson-Kane (Sissie)
Senior, King Kekaulike High School, Maui
chrislynsimpsonkane@hotmail.com | 808-463-6110



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Dear Chair Kidani and the Committee on Education:

I'm writing in support of HB133 to appropriate funds to establish surfing as an interscholastic sport in the Department of Education (DOE). The Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation supports the development of competitive water sports in Hawaii. Surfing is Hawaii's official sport and is intrinsic to our cultural identity, historically and today. Additionally, surfing teaches and builds water safety skills that are sorely needed in our state which ranks second in the nation for rate of drowning among residents.

Surfing was designated as an official interscholastic sport in the DOE in 2014. The purpose of this bill is to provide the funding needed to get teams established around the state, so that the league thresholds can be met for three league tournaments to occur, triggering a state championship to be held by HHSAA. Once a state championship is held, the sport would be funded within the budget of other DOE varsity athletics, like soccer, football, archery, bowling, and flag football. This evolution is not anticipated to take more than a few years at most. Maui has an existing league championship; OIA and ILH are very close to the threshold; Kauai only needs 2 schools to participate.

The safety protocols of the sport were already approved and established by the DOE in 2014 and a copy can be found inside the white paper. These are probably the most extensive safety protocols of any DOE sport and to date the Maui interscholastic league and the Oahu club leagues have great safety records.

The Foundation published a white paper about surfing in schools which can be found [at this link](#) for further background.

Please help surfing get past the tipping point to become a sport our kids can participate in to proudly represent their schools and receive varsity status.

Mahalo

Sarah Fairchild
Executive Director

DUKE'S CREED:

"In Hawai'i, we greet friends, loved ones or strangers with Aloha, which means with love. Aloha is the key word to the universal spirit of real hospitality, which makes Hawai'i renowned as the world's center of understanding and fellowship. Try meeting or leaving people with Aloha. You'll be surprised by their reaction. I believe it and it is my creed. Aloha to you."

DUKE PAOA KAHANAMOKU

LATE

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 10:38:15 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ty Simpson-Kane	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB133 – Establishing Surfing as an Interscholastic Sport

Aloha Honorable Members of the House and Senate,

My name is Ty Simpson-Kane, and I stand before you today as a **Native Hawaiian surfer**, a proud graduate of Kamehameha Schools Maui, and a lifelong waterman whose life has been shaped by the ocean and the sport of surfing. I am also currently a junior at California Maritime Academy, enrolled in the Marine Transportation Program, where I continue to expand my education and career path rooted in the ocean. Today, I respectfully ask for your support and passage of **HB133**, a bill that is not only vital for the future of surfing in Hawai'i but will help transform the lives of countless young Hawaiians and student-athletes statewide.

Surfing is not just a sport to me—it is my identity, my purpose, and my passion. I was born and raised on the North Shore of Maui, in the small town of Kuau, where the ocean has always been my teacher, my guide, and my home. From the moment I was born, I was in the ocean. I began competing at the age of five, and from there, my journey in surfing has taken me all around the world.

At 13, I became the youngest male surfer, at the time, to surf the legendary waves of Peahi, also known as Jaws. At 14, I had a historic ride that earned recognition and cemented my place in big wave surfing. At 15, as a sophomore in high school, I was given a wildcard to compete in the WSL Peahi Big Wave Challenge. At 16, as a junior in high school, I became the youngest male athlete to join the World Surf League's Big Wave Tour. At 20 years old, I have pushed the limits in big wave surfing and am a contender for the record for the largest paddle wave completely ridden.

However, these milestones did not come from talent alone—they were made possible by the foundation I built during my high school years. The opportunity to compete and represent my school through the Kamehameha Schools Maui Surf Team played a pivotal role in shaping my path. High school surfing provided me with not just a platform for competition but a sense of community, discipline, and support that fueled my ambition and guided my progress in the sport. It was during these formative years that I learned the importance of teamwork, leadership, and perseverance—skills that have helped me succeed not only in surfing but in every aspect of my life.

For me, high school surfing was where I truly found my footing and developed the drive to push beyond my limits. It gave me a sense of purpose and a focus that has carried me through the years. I know that many other students across Hawai'i could benefit from this same experience, which is why I stand before you today.

HB133 will provide that opportunity for countless students—by officially recognizing surfing as an interscholastic sport, we can ensure that future generations of young Hawaiians have the same access to these life-changing experiences. For many students, surfing is more than just a hobby—it's a lifeline, a source of identity, and an integral part of their upbringing. Yet, without formal recognition and support for surfing at the scholastic level, so many students will never realize their full potential.

By passing **HB133**, you will give Hawai'i's youth the chance to compete, represent their schools, and grow through the sport that has shaped so many of us. It will provide them with the chance to learn valuable life skills—confidence, discipline, resilience—that transcend the waves and benefit them throughout their lives. We can't afford to wait any longer. The future of surfing in Hawai'i and the future of our keiki depend on it.

Surfing is not just a sport—it's a part of who we are as a people. It connects us to our culture, our land, and the ocean. Supporting **HB133** is an investment in the future of our youth, our heritage, and the continued legacy of surfing in Hawai'i.

Moreover, the economic impact of surfing in Hawai'i is undeniable. As a global surfing destination, Hawai'i attracts tourists from all over the world, and surfing events generate millions of dollars in revenue for our state. By fostering a generation of skilled and passionate surfers through school programs, we help ensure that Hawai'i remains the epicenter of surfing, benefiting both the community and the economy.

Through my work with the Maui Ola Foundation, I have seen firsthand how surfing can heal, transform, and inspire. I've had the privilege of hosting surf days for children living with cystic fibrosis and partnering with organizations like the Hawaii Make-A-Wish Foundation to introduce kids to the ocean. These experiences have reinforced my belief in the power of surfing to bring people together and create lasting change.

HB133 is not just about surfing—it's about creating opportunities, empowering youth, and honoring our deep cultural connection to the ocean. By passing this bill, we can ensure that future generations of Hawai'i surfers have the resources they need to continue carrying the torch of this beloved sport and preserving it as a cornerstone of our culture.

I humbly ask for your support in the passing of HB133. Let us make sure surfing is a part of Hawai'i's future, just as it has always been a part of our past. Please invest in our youth, in our culture, and in the future of Hawai'i's surfing legacy.

Mahalo Nui Loa for your time, consideration, and unwavering support of our keiki, our culture, and the future of highschool surfing.

With deepest respect,

Ty Simpson-Kane

ty_simpsonkane@hotmail.com | 808-283-1716

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
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OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

March 10, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
HB 133, HD 2, RELATING TO SURFING
Senate Committee on Education
Wednesday, March 12, 2025
3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 229
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 133, HD 2, Relating to Surfing. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I wholeheartedly support the intent of HB 133, HD 2, which would greatly affect the Kaua'i community.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 133, HD 2. 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, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:ss

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

Senate Committee on Education

March 12, 2025; 3:00 PM

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of

House Bill 133 HD2 Relating to Surfing

Honorable Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

The County of Kaua'i is in **support** of HB 133 HD2 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 has 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 HD2 Relating to Surfing.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB133 HD2
RELATING TO SURFING**

Senate Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 12, 2025

3:00 PM

Conference Room 229

Aloha e Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim and Members of the Committee:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to **supports House Bill 133, HD2**, which provides full funding for the implementation of five high school interscholastic board surfing programs—fulfilling the Legislature’s intent from 2016.

Since the Legislature authorized interscholastic surfing in 2016, only one league—in Maui County—has been established. Meanwhile, states like New York and the Carolinas have successfully launched high school surfing leagues. It is past time for Hawai'i to fully embrace the sport that originated in these islands.

By providing \$2 million in funding, this bill will support five athletic leagues statewide, including public, private, charter, and Hawaiian language immersion (Kaiapuni) schools, ensuring broader participation and fostering the next generation of Hawai'i born surfers. As noted in Standing Committee Report No. 152 on HB122, HD1 in 2016, the committee stated, “Surfing is of significant cultural, social, and economic value to the State... and should be sponsored by more of the State’s athletic leagues to enable student-athletes to compete in and perpetuate the legacy of this sport through state championship events.”

Beyond expanding athletic opportunities, this bill sends a clear cultural message that Native Hawaiian traditions and innovations deserve recognition and protection. OHA urges the Legislature to fulfill the promise made in 2016 by ensuring all five leagues are established. Doing so will preserve, promote, and honor Native Hawaiian culture while providing invaluable opportunities for Hawai'i's youth.

Mahalo for your time and consideration, we ask that this committee **pass** this bill.

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 2:58:53 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joslyn Sato	Testifying for Leilehua High School - Mules Surf Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Thank you for scheduling a hearing and allowing testimony. I stand to support HB133 to provide students an opportunity to represent their high school and peers to be part of Hawai'i's sport of Surfing. By recognizing high school surfing as an (OIA) Interscholastic Sport we can use the upcoming 2025-2026 school year to work collaboratively with the DOE and OIA to develop the sport's structure and financial requirements real time while seeing the surf season in action. Since financial requirements have been the most recent concern, by using an actual season to see and talk through requirements, we can then create a sustainable estimate and financial plan. Thus, supporting high school surfing as an OIA sport, and providing some financial appropriation for the upcoming school year will allow schools to participate and allow us to work through the season structure and budget.

Surfing offers many benefits in addition to those achieved being a student-athlete. Surfing aligns with the DOE's Nā Hopena A'o (HĀ) by allowing students to be connected to the ocean and an active lifestyle rich in culture and history. As a parent, this has been an excellent experience for my daughter to connect her passion and represent her school doing her "sport", while gaining benefits that impact her well-being, build connections, gain ocean safety and ocean stewardship, and exposure to career opportunities; all that will last well beyond high school.

High school surfing has gone through the legislature on several occasions, and now is the time to take a step forward and find ways to collaborate and work towards making high school surfing a recognized and supported 'Oahu high school sport.

The Current Season

15 'Oahu schools (6 private schools and 9 public schools) have participated in the high school surf contests this school year. Several others have identified they were interested but due to a lack of resources to include funding and program offerings to fulfill the coach and student ocean lifeguard requirements, schools struggle to fulfill requirements in time to participate.

This year, 162 students (about 102 Boys and 60 Girls) have participated in a surf contest so far. With the growth of participating schools, the coaches have been working together to plan and coordinate the season. Teams follow the [Surfing in Hawai'i Schools: A White Paper](#). The

Hawai'i Surfing Association hosts all contests, and works with a coach working group to determine dates, locations, rosters, etc.

The current season is planned for all schools to compete in at least 5 contests, which requires about 7 Contest Days. This limitation is based on Ocean/Park permit limitations on time as well as number of students in a heat (in the water competing at a time).

- A Contest day consists of 2 Contests (a morning contest and an afternoon contest). 6 Schools participate in a Contest (12 schools total on a Contest Day).
- There are 5 Divisions, with 3 heats in each (1 student per school in each heat). Divisions include Boys Shortboard, Girls Shortboard, Coed Bodyboard, Boys Longboard, and Girls Longboard.
- Teams do not need a full roster to participate.

General expenses for each team include Contest Fees from the Hawai'i Surfing Association, AAU membership for each student and coach, Coach ocean lifeguard training classes, Student ocean lifeguard training classes, and any other general equipment needed.

By moving this bill forward, we can work on the key areas that continue to come up during legislative hearings:

- Interest to become an OIA Sport: Starting a surf team without resources is challenging, many start off small and getting all the requirements completed without any resources prevents schools from starting a team.

When considering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in any sport, not all sports will have the same level of interest at every school and/or might be smaller teams, but if a sport (especially one tied so closely to Hawai'i's culture, history, economy, and lifestyle) cannot fulfill the requirements to meet OIA consideration, then possibly a new approach may need to be considered to provide a process and way to recognize and support (resources & funding).

- Safety & Liability: Surfing occurs in the ocean, which is not a controlled environment like a park or school field or court; however, surfing is not the first ocean sport. There are other sports that take place in the ocean and we can leverage those safety protocols. In addition, Maui has offered surfing for about 10-years. Teams follow guidance established in the White Paper with surveying ocean conditions, having lifeguards, having students/coaches trained, AAU insurance, and ensuring proper equipment.
- Cost: Primary fees are the Contest Fees determined by the Hawai'i Surfing Association's operating costs. While I've been told there are some concerns about the fees being high, there could be an opportunity to work with the contest operator and/or find other ways to run a contest leveraging another vendor and/or creating an OIA contest team like the

Maui Interscholastic League to reduce costs while maintaining safety and requirements to run a contest.

Recognizing High School Surfing as an Interscholastic Sport is an opportunity to support and invest in our Hawai'i - the culture, the history, the future, the lifestyle. Your support would provide resources to strengthen the program. Your investment is not only for a sport with contests, but a program that builds ocean stewards connected to the 'aina, promote and support active lifestyle and community/cultural connections, expose students to future careers related to the ocean and surf industry which directly supports Hawai'i, and you invest in ocean safety by giving coaches and students skills that they use when they are in the ocean to keep not only themselves safe but also safety of others.

Thank you for your time and consideration to support HB133.

Joslyn Sato

Parent and Volunteer of Leilehua High School's Mules Surf Team

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 8:40:08 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessamy Town Hornor	Testifying for Hawaii Water Safety Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of the Surfing in Schools bill. I am a co-founder of the Hawai'i Water Safety Coalition and executive editor of the newly published Hawai'i Water Safety Plan.

In addition to promoting surfing as a sport, the Surfing in Schools bill would help teach water safety and drowning prevention to our youth by offering guidance from experienced coaches and by addressing real world situations. We also know that safety interventions and rescues happen every day among surfers on our beaches, coastlines and surf breaks. Elevating community-based water and ocean safety makes us all safer in and around the ocean in Hawai'i.

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 8:54:03 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

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

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 9:41:10 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I SUPPORT this bill as it is a great sport for our keiki to learn and compete in. We should have more access to sports like surfing which are culturally significant and well known worldwide.

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 9:41:08 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James D Howe Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 133 based on my 41 years of professional experience in Ocean Safety, Ocean Safety Management, and Aquatic Injury Prevention in the State of Hawai‘i.

When the BOE passed a resolution to make surfing a high school sport the DOE reached out to Ocean Safety professionals to assist in developing a high school surfing program.

That program has been in place for more than a decade. The program allowed surfing to go forward as a club sport. On Maui, thru the leadership of Kim Ball and Archie Kalepa, the Maui Interscholastic League adopted surfing as a sport and the program moved into the high school sport program.

This has been highly successful on Maui but has not been the case on Kauai, Hawai‘i, and Oahu where to program has remained in the club category.

Today, there is ample evidence that the safety concerns that have been raised by the DOE, should not be the major deciding factor in determining the future for the program.

The benefits:

Students that participate in the high school surfing program are learning ocean safety skills that not only protect them but contribute to the overall safety of all those who use our ocean waters.

Additional benefits include fitness, friendship, healthy competition, and an incentive to maintain a passing grade point level (which incentivizes class attendance).

The cost associated with this sport are minimal. The benefits are substantial. Surfing and association ocean recreational activities are lifelong.

Thank you for your favorable consideration of HB 133.

Jim Howe

City and County of Honolulu Emergency Services Director (ret) and Ocean Safety Chief (ret)

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:56:49 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Kākou,

My name is Kaipoi Kelling and I support HB 133. I am a surf coach for Samuel M. Kamakau L.P.C.S. and we are currently in our second season.

I would like to give a shout out to the Campbell Sabers for their brand new 25 million dollar sports complex. It is well deserved and it will be utilized for generations to come in the promotion of sportmanship and equality for all of the keiki on the 'Ewa plain.

Unfortunately, none of my students could benefit from such a great sports complex. Imagine if other student athletes received 1 percent of that budget of 25 million dollars, that would equate to \$ 2,500,000. Then imagine this bill got 1 percent of that amount, that would be about \$ 250,000 dollars. Then we go 20% of this \$ 250,000 which would equal to about \$ 50,000 dollars.

This \$50,000 for example could be used per season. This amount will allow us to hire professional water patrol, professional judges and other local staff and infrastructure. This budget would employ our local community to provide the best venues for our keiki who chose to express their athletic abilities upon the surface of the sea.

Imagine that. All of our keiki are given multiple avenues to partake and develop their minds, bodies and spirit through a healthy lifestyle via a multi million dollar sports complex or a tiny shoal on our glorious sands patrolled and secured by our professional first responders.

Hmmm, a tiny slice of heaven and if this said budget lasted for 20 years, the final cost is a million dollars a mere 4% of that new complex and we will have embraced, protected and serve over 3000 students perhaps in that 20 year run. Not a bad investment.

Mahalo a nui,

Kaipoi Kelling



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 HB2
Relating to Surfing
Senate Committee on Education
Malaki 12, 2025
3:00 PM

Date: Malaki 12, 2025
Subject: Testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 133 HD2: Relating to Surfing

Aloha mai kākou e nā Luna o Ke Kōmike of Education,

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-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 12:37:58 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isabella Callahan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Isabella Callahan, I wish to testify an issue related to appropriate funding to the Department Of Education to support the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport. I felt the need to testify this because I wish for the surfing programs to be recognized as a competitive sport for High Schools across the island and to be funded like other established competitive sports, without the members having to fund fund this matter themselves.

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 11:03:59 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin Prado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Kristin Prado and I'm here today to advocate for the inclusion of surfing as an official high school sport in Hawai'i. I am currently a teacher and surf club advisor at Kapolei High School. I have volunteered countless weekend and after school hours for surf club to help provide our high school keiki with the opportunity to compete in surfing and body boarding against other schools. Not all students have the time, money, or skills to compete individually. It's more than just a sport; it's a vital connection to our culture, a powerful educational tool, and a pathway to lifelong health and well-being for our keiki.

Additionally, students benefit from being student-athletes. Students need to maintain a 2.0 GPA without any F grades to be able to continue participating in a sport. These restrictions do not apply to club sports. The majority of students that participated in surf club at KHS did not participate in other school sports. There is a need to find a place for all students to feel supported and connected to the school. Surfing provides that avenue for many students who otherwise would not be connected to the school. Furthermore, some of the students involved in surf club may also benefit from the academic restrictions required by high school sports. I hope that one day there is something (club, sport, activity) for all students to be involved in during their high school years. However, I believe that surfing would fit the need for many of our otherwise marginalized students that really connect with surfing and/or body boarding.

Hawai'i is the birthplace of surfing. It's woven into the very fabric of our identity. Yet, while we celebrate surfing's global impact and host prestigious competitions, we're missing an opportunity to formally integrate this cornerstone of Hawaiian culture into our educational system. Just as paddling has rightfully earned its place as a recognized sport, so too should surfing.

Imagine the impact on our students. Surfing is not merely about riding waves; it's about understanding the ocean, respecting its power, and developing a deep connection to it. Anyone who surfs has a home break filled with regulars. The surfing community is huge and we need to extend it to our high school students. Having surfing as a high school sport will also foster community connections within the local and state community members and stakeholders. It would be a shame to not include surfing as a high school sport when our state is known for surfing.

Hawai'i, the epicenter of surfing, should lead the way in recognizing and supporting this vital part of our heritage. Hawai'i is also home to many of the most prestigious surf breaks and surf competitions. By making surfing a high school sport, we're not just creating athletes; we're nurturing future stewards of our ocean, guardians of our culture, and healthy, resilient members of our community.

I am not just a teacher, I am also a parent to three keiki. I also want surfing to be a high school sport for my own children because I would like them to be able to compete in high school surf competitions. Please consider making surfing and body boarding high school sports.

The Benefits of HB133 HD2
11 March 2025

Aloha committee chair and committee members

My name is Koby Revita-Wagner and I am currently a junior in Kealakehe High School. I am writing in support of HB133. The bill that was proposed was to make surfing an interscholastic sport. By promoting physical and mental well-being, as well as the protection of Hawaiian culture, HB133 HD2 would bring great benefits to students, schools, and society as a whole.

Improving physical and mental health.

Surfing is more than just a sport; it is a way of life in Hawaii. The official recognition of surfing as an interscholastic sport by HB133 HD2 would encourage greater physical activity among students, an important step in addressing the growing rate of obesity and physical inactivity among children. Studies by the American Psychological Association show that participation in sporting activities, including surfing, greatly reduces stress and anxiety levels among adolescents, thus contributing to better mental health outcomes (APA, 2021). Surfing is an all-around physical workout, providing cardiovascular benefits, building strength, and developing coordination. Besides these physical benefits, the mental health benefits of surfing are well established. Wave riding is a life-changing experience that encourages mindfulness, reduces stress, and improves an individual's overall sense of well-being. The prevalence of mental health issues among youth continues to rise, and surfing offers a natural and therapeutic outlet for self-expression.

Preserving Hawaiian Culture and Heritage

Surfing, or he'e nalu in Hawaiian, is deeply rooted in Hawaiian history and culture. By incorporating surfing into school sports programs, HB133 HD2 will help perpetuate and honor this cultural practice. Such a bill would give students the chance to connect with their heritage while learning the values of respect, discipline, and harmony with nature that surfing embodies. Surfing has been an integral part of Hawaiian culture for centuries, according to the Hawaiian Historical Society, and making it a part of schools would help pass on the tradition to future generations (Hawaiian Historical Society, 2020). In addition, this bill would serve as a vehicle for teaching students about the environmental stewardship necessary for the protection of our oceans and coastlines, ensuring that future generations will appreciate and preserve these valuable resources.

Conclusion

HB 133 HD2 is more than just a bill; it is a chance to promote the welfare of Hawaii's youth, protect our heritage, and protect our communities. With surfing being an interscholastic

sport, we can promote physical and mental wellness and keep the standards of Hawaiian culture intact. I urge you to sign this bill to give our students a better future.

Thank you for your consideration and time

References

American Psychological Association. (2021). *The Mental Health Benefits of Physical Activity for Adolescents*. <https://www.apa.org>

Hawaiian Historical Society. (2020). *The Cultural Significance of Surfing in Hawaii*. <https://www.hawaiianhistory.org>

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:03:38 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly Support HB133,

Paul Giles

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:02:49 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ian A. Masterson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB 133 HD2 to appropriate funds that establish surfing as a high school sport in Hawaii. It is so important for the future of Hawaii as well as surfing as a sport to ensure that the Hawaiian values which surfing has always centered around are shared out from Hawaii. In this way, passionate youth who succeed through high school surf teams will go on to promote surfing as Hawaiian at international competitions and venues. Surfing must retain its regal Pacific past and connection to the aloha spirit, even as a growing community of 20 million surfers worldwide looks to Hawaii for lessons in etiquette and cultural connections to the roots of surfing.

Surfing is also an Olympic activity, perhaps one of the oldest sports in the Olympics. In order to foster a competitive surfing community amongst our youth in Hawaii, we must recognize surfing as a legitimate high school sport with legislative support for surf teams in our schools. Surfing is a Traditional Hawaiian Cultural Activity, and we are the cradle of surfing in our modern world. Just as surfing was integrated as a daily and ritual athletic activity as well as a poetic metaphor within Hawaiian culture for thousands of years, surfing should be recognized and integrated into our educational and athletic institutions today.

We are the destination for surfers to test their mettle in our perfect waves, which is an economic benefit for our State. The gift came from our shores, and annually, thousands of people journey here to surf our waves and make that connection with our surfing roots. In order to foster youth to watermen and waterwomen that can serve as lifeguards and emergency services for the surfers and spectators who make it here, we must offer surfing as an option among sports for our high schools, ultimately leading our youth towards professional career pathways that give them the opportunity to remain here in Hawai'i to raise their families.

Also, in these challenging economic times, legitimate opportunities in surfing give our keiki better choices within our education system, rather than turning away from it to jump in the water. By having surfing in the schools, our youth will better understand their relationship to their surfing past as uniquely Hawaiian—an advantage in this highly competitive sport. Surfing is a national pastime of the Hawaiian people then and now, so we must be competitive at the level of government support as well if we are to foster future world champions like Carissa Moore. Other nations provide major support to their surfing competitors and have institutionalized local venues and opportunities to train young surfers--so should we.

By supporting SB 133, we are ultimately supporting the goals of the Hawai'i State Surfing Commission, which promotes surfing industry, roots, and culture, as emanating from Hawaii. Please give us the opportunity to grow surfing as the official individual State Sport by including and funding surfing in the schools--the benefits are exponential for our youth, our economy, and our vibrant living Hawaiian culture. Mahalo for your positive vote, and much aloha.

Ian 'Akahi Masterson

Testimony in Support of Making Surfing an Interscholastic Sport in Hawaii

Aloha,

I am honored to share my support for recognizing surfing as an interscholastic sport in Hawaii. Surfing is more than just a pastime in Hawaii—it is a deep-rooted cultural tradition, a source of personal growth, and a pathway to athletic excellence. By incorporating surfing into Hawaii's interscholastic sports programs, we provide students with opportunities for personal development, academic engagement, and future career paths, both within and beyond the sport itself.

Hawaii is the birthplace of surfing, and our keiki should have the chance to develop their skills in a structured and supportive school environment, just as they do with football, volleyball, and other established sports. Many of our young athletes already dedicate themselves to surfing, yet they lack the same resources, coaching, and scholarship opportunities available in other high school sports. Making surfing an official interscholastic sport would ensure that these students receive the recognition and support they deserve while fostering values of discipline, teamwork, and environmental stewardship.

Additionally, surfing promotes a healthy lifestyle and a deep connection to the ocean, encouraging students to respect and protect our natural resources. It is a sport that is accessible to a broad range of students, including those who may not traditionally participate in land-based sports. With the right support, Hawaii can lead the nation in integrating surfing into school athletics, opening doors for future professionals, Olympians, and ocean-minded leaders.

By making surfing an interscholastic sport, we honor the cultural heritage, invest in our youth, and solidify Hawaii's role as the epicenter of global surfing. I urge you to support this initiative for the benefit of our students, our schools, and our community.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cara Short". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Cara Short

AccesSurf Executive Director

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:52:10 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dylan McCall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I hope our state approves this bill for all of our keikis of Hawaii throughout all 4 counties who choose surfing as their sport & want to represent their school & feel the pride all others feel with playing a high school sport.

I experienced my first Maui Interscholastic League (MIL) Surf meet this weekend. I am an assistant coach for one of the high schools here on Maui. You could really feel the Pride & competitiveness amongst all the coaches, fans, & participants like any high school sports game. And I know that feeling of pride & competition having grown up on Maui & playing volleyball & basketball all 4 yrs in high school. I wish surfing was a high school sport when I was in high school!

Maui county has proven that it can be done with fun & fairness and most importantly, safely. Therefore it should be pretty easily replicated for the other counties.

Hawaii is the birthplace of surfing; it makes too much sense for it not to be included in our high school sports program for our keikis of Hawaii. Please support this bill.

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 8:07:24 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allison Schaefers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB 133, which appropriates funds to the Department of Education to support the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport.

The Hawai'i Water Safety Coalition earlier this month released the first Hawaii Water Safety Plan countering Hawai'i's drowning crisis by ensuring that everyone is safe on, in, and around the water. Statistics in the plan from the Hawai'i Department of Health show that we are in a drowning crisis, and we are not doing enough to address it.

1. Hawai'i has the nation's second highest rate of death by drowning for residents in the nation
2. Drowning is now the number one cause of death for children in Hawai'i, ages 1–15.

This bill was modeled after recommendations from the plan, which was supported by a broad network of water safety advocates across the state, including bereaved parents like me, who have lost a child to drowning.

When it comes to surfing, the plan recommends: “funding surfing as an interscholastic sport and expanding the requirements for lifesaving training to all participants,” and “funding aquatics, surfing, and lifeguard career and technical education (CTE) training at state Department of Education (DOE) schools.”

A reason that making surfing an interscholastic sport is so important is that it is another way that allows our children to develop swimming skills, while connecting to their culture. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander culture is so entrenched with water that it could be argued that those who cannot swim cannot fully embrace and perpetuate their culture. By providing an opportunity for Hawaii students to participate in surfing as a sport, more will develop swimming skills and learn how to mālama each other and the ocean.

The ocean is beautiful, but it can also be dangerous, so we need to be careful and aware. By practicing mālama, we make sure to watch over others while swimming, warn them about strong currents, and help anyone who might be in trouble. Ocean safety isn't just up to one person—it's something we all need to do together. By caring for each other, we keep everyone safe and show respect for the ocean and its power.

Hawaii has some of the best watermen and waterwomen in the world, but these skills are not getting passed down in the current climate where many parents are working two and three jobs and have neither the time nor the money or transportation to get their children to lessons, which are often expensive, or to expose their children to watersports like surfing. Drowning across the world is increasingly an equity issue, and one place we can more easily address this is by making surfing an interscholastic sport. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are about 27% of Hawai'i s population yet make up 36% of resident drowning deaths.

Drowning death rates for Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders are 1.5x higher than the rate for all other ethnicities, and the disparities are especially heart-tugging when it comes to Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander children ages 1-17, whose percentage of drowning deaths was more than 3X higher than the percentage for all other ethnicities in the same age group.

While there are a few great free surfing programs available, enrollment is limited, and again the transportation requirement to get to these programs will exclude our poorest students. Only one in five local athletic leagues have sponsored surfing. The lack of interscholastic surfing programs limits opportunities for inspired students to pursue competitive surfing.

Our kids deserve more. Let's give them the tools that they need to be safe in, on and around the water in our island state, and to take their place as global surfing leaders, after all they come from the birthplace of surfing.

Moreover, surfing offers great economic potential for Hawaii. Surfing contests are a great way to market Hawaii across the world and attract numerous competitors and spectators. An economic impact study on the 2010 Vans Triple Crown of Surfing, held on the north shore of Oahu, estimated that the event generated \$20,900,000 in spending.

Devoting resources to surfing programs in the state's schools will perpetuate the sport of surfing in the state and continue to entice tourists across the globe to visit the state to spectate or experience surfing firsthand.

Sincerely,

Allison Schaefer

Hawaii Water Safety Coalition bereaved parent volunteer

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:29:50 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jared Aquino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please make surfing a sport in kapolei high

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 1:09:46 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiele COnrad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I completely support allowing surfers to be sanctioned as a high school sport.

I grew up as a water baby; with tomato skin, raisin fingers, and golden streaks in my hair. The ocean became my home, a place that both humbles and comforts me. My grandpa introduced me to surfing when I was just 6 months old; Kuhio Beach is where he would paddle me around on the nose of his surfboard. My sister, grandma, and I would excitedly await for his return from surfing Queens, Waikiki to hear stories from the lineup. At 3 years old, my grandpa took me out for the first time where I immediately fell in love with his passion, and it has been implemented in my life ever since.

Duke Kahanamoku is the godfather of surfing, he grew up in our islands. Surfing is what connects me to my family, and is what connects people to their ancestors. Competing is a way to create endless freindships and develop skills that would simply not be possible without it.

Please give the chance for other high school students, such as myself to represent Hawaii and our culture doing what we love!

Before the Senate Committee on Education, House Bill 133 HD2 Relating to Surfing

Malaki 12, 2025 3:00 p.m., Rm 229

STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha mai kākou e nā Alaka'i a me nā Lālā 'Aha Kenekoa o ke Kōmike Ho'ona'auao,

My name is Davin Kānana Kelling and I am a senior at Ke Kula 'o Samuel M. Kamakau, Laboratory Public Charter School. I am in **strong support** of HB133 HD2, 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 all public schools across O'ahu.

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 an OIA 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 hana ku'una (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 high school competitions.

As student safety is a concern for all, I feel that it 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 with a 1:6 coach to student surfer ratio.

As cost is also a concern for surfing, I feel that other sports that involve the competition of multiple schools at a single time can be just as costly. For example, what is the budget for the OIA Paddling season? This sport is more similar to surfing than is football, which is a competition between two schools and allows the host school to charge an entry fee. As Hawai'i hosts multiple pro surf competitions, donations from these competitions could be sought after to further support surfing in the high schools. Afterall, our Hawai'i student surfing athletes serve as a pipeline to these professional competitions with our very own Ēwelei'ula Wong, Kamakau class of 2023 now surfing in the professional arena.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify and for your consideration.

Me ke aloha nō,
D. Kananaikawaiola Kelling
Kamakau, Class of 2025

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 3:50:32 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kalani Kaanaana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 133 HD2, which proposes appropriating funds to the Department of Education to establish surfing as an interscholastic sport in Hawai'i's public schools.

Approving funds as outlined in HB 133 HD2 is a necessary step to ensure that schools have the resources to implement and sustain surfing programs effectively. This investment in our youth will enrich their educational experience and strengthen our community's connection to its cultural roots.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB 133 HD2

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Kalani Kaanaana

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 6:44:02 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

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-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 5:04:29 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Olivia Rohan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a senior at Leilehua high school and while I am not a surfer, I am a paddler. I truly believe that surfing should be a DOE interscholastic sport because surfing is such a big part of the culture here in Hawaii. I have watched my teammates surf (or try to) after our paddling practices. So many student will benefit from this sport, not only because they will get to compete. But they will be able to make connections with other students who share their love of surfing.

LATE

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 4:57:13 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bonnie Fraser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A Duke Kahanamoku statue welcomes everyone to Waikīkī with open arms. Duke brought surfing to the world, was a true Hawaiian hero and one of the world's greatest watermen. It's shameful that every school doesn't have surfing. Even worse that 50% of the population currently doesn't even know how to swim!! How did this happen? We need to follow his example. We need every school to have water education and water sports, especially surfing.

LATE

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:56:49 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sam Fischer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Sam Fischer. I am a high school science teacher at Kamaile Academy Public Charter School in Mākaha and have spent many years as a surf coach in Hawai'i and California. I am writing to express my strong support for HB133 and the inclusion of surfing as a recognized school sport in Hawai'i. As a state deeply connected to the ocean and the birthplace of modern surfing, we have a unique opportunity to integrate this culturally and physically enriching sport into our educational system. Surfing is more than just a recreational activity—it is a powerful tool for students' personal growth, social development, and teamwork.

Participating in a school-sponsored surfing program can significantly boost students' self-esteem. Surfing is a sport that requires persistence, patience, and resilience. When students learn to paddle out, catch waves, and improve their skills over time, they experience a deep sense of accomplishment. Mastering the ocean's challenges fosters confidence, encouraging students to push their limits, embrace new experiences, and develop a positive self-image. Additionally, surfing provides an inclusive environment where students of all backgrounds can succeed, regardless of traditional athletic ability.

Surfing also uniquely nurtures social and emotional well-being. The sport teaches students how to manage stress, remain calm under pressure, and embrace failure as part of growth. The rhythmic nature of the ocean provides a therapeutic environment that reduces anxiety and enhances mental health. Furthermore, being immersed in nature has been linked to lower stress levels, increased focus, and overall emotional balance—critical factors in student success both inside and outside the classroom.

While often seen as an individual sport, surfing in a school setting fosters exceptional teamwork and collaboration. Students learn to support and encourage one another in the water, sharing techniques, celebrating successes, and providing motivation through challenges. Surf teams require strong communication and camaraderie, as athletes work together in practice, competitions, and safety training. By learning to respect the ocean and each other, students develop a sense of responsibility and community—essential life skills that extend far beyond the waves.

By recognizing surfing as a school sport and providing appropriate funding, we are not only embracing Hawai'i's rich cultural heritage but also providing students with a pathway to personal

growth, emotional well-being, and teamwork. Surfing promotes a healthy, active lifestyle while equipping students with lifelong skills that will serve them in academics, careers, and beyond.

High school surf teams do exist here, that is no secret. But the reality is that year after year teams struggle with funding, robbing opportunities from countless students to connect with 'āina, kai, and their cultural heritage. I urge you to support HB133, the inclusion of surfing as a school sport in our educational programs, and ultimately Hawaiian culture. Choosing otherwise is no less than a denial of surfing's profound cultural importance and a denial of one of the many contributions Hawai'i has given the world.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Sam Fischer

LATE

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:37:28 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OPPOSE: LIABILITY RISK TO THE STATE OF HAWAII on future lawsuits!

Dismantling of U. S. Dept. of Education and funding to the SOH!

LATE

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 9:51:52 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leslie "Crawford" Mitchell	Testifying for Wai'anae High School Surf Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Crawford Mitchell, and I am writing in strong support of HB 133, which seeks to include surfing as an officially recognized public school sport in Hawai'i, granting it the same funding and opportunities as other interscholastic sports. As an assistant coach for the Wai'anae High School Surf Team, I have seen firsthand the incredible impact this sport has on our students—particularly those who struggle with traditional school settings or challenging personal circumstances.

For many of our keiki, surfing is more than just a sport—it is a lifeline. It provides structure, mentorship, and a healthy outlet that keeps students engaged and connected to their education. Surfing teaches discipline, resilience, and respect for the ocean, all while fostering a deep connection to Hawai'i's natural environment. I have seen students transform—those who were once disengaged in school find purpose and confidence in the water, carrying that motivation into their academics and personal lives.

However, one of the biggest challenges surf teams face is the lack of financial support. Unlike other high school sports that receive funding for competition fees, equipment, and travel, our surf teams are forced to fundraise on their own or rely on coaches and families to cover costs out of pocket. This not only creates an unfair burden but also adds stress to students who should be focusing on training and competition rather than scrambling for funding. The lack of institutional support limits access to surfing for many talented students, particularly those from lower-income communities, despite surfing being a sport that originated right here in Hawai'i.

Beyond its benefits for student-athletes, surfing is integral to Hawaiian culture and identity. Hawai'i is the birthplace of surfing, and our state has produced some of the world's greatest surfers. By recognizing surfing as an official high school sport, we honor our ancestors who pioneered this tradition and ensure that future generations of Native Hawaiians and kama'āina have the opportunity to excel in the sport at the highest levels. Without institutional support, access to competitive surfing remains limited to those with financial means, preventing many local students from reaching their full potential.

By passing HB 133, the state of Hawai'i would not only provide equitable opportunities for student-athletes but also preserve and promote a tradition that is uniquely ours. This bill ensures

that surfing remains accessible to all students, regardless of economic background, and that our keiki have the chance to represent Hawai'i in a sport that is deeply tied to our heritage.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I urge you to support HB 133 and give our students the opportunity to thrive in and out of the water.

Me ka ha'aha'a,
Crawford Mitchell
Wai'anae High School Surf Team

LATE

HB-133-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 8:48:28 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/12/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Clark	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The surfing club at Kapolei High School was a very fun experience. With many competitions and opportunities to connect with other surfers my age. I believe this is why it should become a sport at this school.