



TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 616, RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

DATE: Thursday, January 30, 2025 **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 309

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Anne T. Horiuchi or Randall M. Wat, Deputy Attorneys General

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the following comments.

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment of educational workers and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers.

The proposed sections 302A-__(d)(5), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), on page 4, lines 1-4, and 302D-__(d)(5), HRS, on page 6, line 20, through page 7, line 2, provide that the DOE and charter schools shall "[a]ssist educational workers with any legal actions that may arise from harassment, including covering the costs incurred from serving temporary restraining orders related to the harassment[.]" For clarity, the Department recommends revising the last phrase on page 4, lines 2-4, and page 6, line 21, through page 7, line 2, to provide: "including **covering** **reimbursing the educational worker for** the costs incurred from serving temporary restraining orders related to the harassment[;], **but shall not include the payment of attorney's fees or court costs;** and" (suggested changes in bold).

Additionally, the bill does not explain what constitutes "harassment." To address this, the Department suggests inserting the following phrase after the word "harassment" on page 2, lines 2 and 4; page 4, line 2; page 5, lines 2 and 4; and page

6, line 21: "**as provided for in section 711-1106 because of the educational worker's position as an educational worker**". (Suggested changes in bold.)

The proposed sections 302A-__(c) and 302D-__(c) provide that an educational worker seeking judicial protection from harassment, "including obtaining a temporary restraining order, shall be entitled to a leave of absence with pay to attend court proceedings related to the protection." Page 2, lines 9-11 (section 2), and page 5, lines 8-11 (section 3). To clarify that such paid leave is appropriate when the educational worker is seeking judicial protection from harassment due to the person's status as an educational worker, the Department recommends amending the proposed sections 302A-__(3) on page 2, lines 8-14, and 302D-__(c) on page 5, lines 8-14, as follows:

(c) An educational worker who seeks judicial protection from harassment, **as provided for in section 711-1106 because of the educational worker's position as an educational worker**, including obtaining a temporary restraining order, shall be entitled to a leave of absence with pay to attend court proceedings related to the protection. The duration of the leave of absence with pay shall be reasonable and sufficient to allow the educational worker to fulfill their court-related obligations.

(Suggested changes in bold.)

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



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

Date: 01/30/2025

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 0616 RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully provides comments on HB 616.

The Department fully supports efforts to protect the safety and well-being of our school, district, and state office staff and administrators. Over the past year, the Department has strengthened protections for administrators, teachers, counselors, volunteers, and employees. These efforts include implementing a Visitor Code of Conduct, which was created in collaboration with the Attorney General's office. The code establishes clear behavioral expectations for parents and guests, enabling the Department to hold individuals accountable for inappropriate actions. Additionally, the Department has explored measures such as issuing trespass notices to problematic individuals and limiting communication with schools in extreme cases.

Our school principals receive training to address threatening or intimidating behavior by non-Department individuals. However, in cases of harassment, the most effective and safest course of action is for employees to involve law enforcement directly. The Department believes these measures will help deter aggressive behavior and reduce instances of employee harassment.

While the Department acknowledges the importance of protecting employees, there are concerns regarding specific provisions in HB 616:

Unconstitutional Use of Public Funds: Paragraph (d)(5) in Section 2 of the bill requires the Department to "assist with any legal actions that may arise from harassment," including covering the

costs of serving temporary restraining orders and hiring private attorneys. These are private legal matters that involve personal rights and responsibilities, and funding such actions with public resources may violate constitutional restrictions on the use of public funds for private purposes.

Reporting of Alleged Harassment: Paragraph (d)(2) in Section 2 requires the Department to notify authorities of alleged harassment on behalf of employees. However, it is in the best interest of the employee to report harassment directly, as they are the primary witness to the incident. Reports made by a third party on an employee's behalf may be considered hearsay and inadmissible in court. Moreover, such third-party involvement could create complications, such as a reporting employee being called as a witness against the harassed individual. The Department encourages employees to report incidents directly to authorities to avoid these issues.

Unclear Processes and Additional Costs:

Leave of Absence: Paragraph (c) of Section 2 requires the Department to provide leave for employees pursuing judicial protection but does not specify what constitutes "reasonable and sufficient time." The Department is unfamiliar with the timelines associated with judicial processes, making it challenging to implement this provision effectively.

Unfunded Mandates: The bill does not appropriate funding to cover the costs of leave, serving temporary restraining orders, or conducting annual training for all employees, which would place a significant financial burden on the Department.

Subjective Determination of Unsafe Conditions: Paragraph (a) of Section 2 allows employees to determine when an unsafe or hazardous condition exists based solely on their subjective belief. Without clear parameters or criteria, this provision could lead to unwarranted reports and disruptions, such as teaching positions remaining vacant if multiple employees claim they feel unsafe. This lack of clarity raises concerns about the potential for misuse or abuse of this provision.

The Department appreciates the intent of HB 616 but recommends that these issues be addressed to ensure the bill is feasible, constitutional, and aligns with the Department's operational capacities.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



MAKALAPUA ALENCASTRE, Ed. D.
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1100, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

FOR: HB 616 Relating to Educational Workers
DATE: January 30, 2025
TIME: 2:00 P.M.
COMMITTEE: Committee on Education
ROOM: Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
FROM: Ed H. Noh, Ed. D., Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 616** which requires the Department of Education and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers.

The Commission appreciates the inclusion of public charter schools in this measure as charter schools and charter school teachers are a part of the public education system.

The Commission is available to work with this committee, the DOE, and our public charter schools in moving this legislation forward. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



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Logan Okita
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Ann Mahi
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TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: **HB 616 - RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Hearing: **1/30/2025, 2:00PM, ROOM 309**

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

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association stands in strong support of HB 616, a critical step towards ensuring a safe and respectful work environment for all educational workers in Hawaii.

This policy is essential because it prioritizes the safety and well-being of educational workers. Harassment, in any form, is unacceptable and can have a significant negative impact on the mental and emotional health of educators. This policy recognizes this and provides a clear framework for addressing and preventing such incidents.

HB 616 ensures accountability and transparency; by requiring clear reporting procedures and investigations, this policy ensures that incidents of harassment are taken seriously and addressed appropriately. This accountability is crucial for maintaining a safe and respectful workplace culture.

HB 616 protects the educational rights of students. When educators are subjected to harassment, their ability to effectively teach and support students is compromised. This policy helps to ensure that educators can focus on their primary duty: providing a quality education to all students.

HB 616 also aligns with best practices; this policy reflects best practices in workplace harassment prevention and aligns with national standards for creating a safe and inclusive work environment.

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

Mahalo.



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2025**

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Rep. Justin Woodson, Chair
Rep. Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

Thursday, January 30, 2025, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on HB616 – RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

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

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties.

UPW supports HB616, which requires the Department of Education (“DOE”) and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers.

We strongly believe that educational workers should feel assured that the DOE and public charter schools are committed to taking effective action against harassment in order to protect the rights and dignity of the hard-working public employees who are tasked with maintaining a positive learning environment for Hawaii’s students.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kalani Werner", is written over a thin blue horizontal line.

Kalani Werner
State Director

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HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808,543.0011 • Fax: 808,528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
The House of Representatives
Committee on Education
Committee on Health

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

January 30, 2025

H.B. 616 — RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO fully supports H.B. 616, which requires the Department of Education and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers.

Each school year, we are contacted by multiple members employed at our public and charter schools who experience threats of violence and harassing behavior made directly at them or witnessed by them in the course of their employment and within the scope of their duties and responsibilities. Threats are occurring in school offices, at meetings, over the phone, via email, and more recently, through social media and even AI-generated threats which may target multiple schools.

Threats must be treated seriously and can often disrupt an entire school community for a period of time. We strongly support any efforts to increase protection for our educational workers. They should feel assured that the Department is committed to taking prompt and effective action against harassing conduct and those who engage in harassing behavior should be investigated and held accountable.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. 616.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

HB-616

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 11:35:55 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inger Stonehill	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Strong Support for HB616 to Protect Educational Workers from Harassment

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill (HB) 616 and to urge you to pass this critical piece of legislation that will safeguard Hawai‘i’s dedicated educational workers from persistent harassment and workplace intimidation.

As confirmed last year during the January 30, 2024, House Committee on Education hearing, there is currently no standardized Department of Education (DOE) procedure for handling harassment incidents involving community members. Instead, the response is left entirely to the discretion of an educational worker’s immediate supervisor, leading to disparities in enforcement and inequities in protection. The lack of a formalized process leaves countless employees vulnerable to repeated harassment, with no clear mechanisms for accountability or safety.

For over a decade, DOE inaction has left educators to fend for themselves against these threats, despite existing policies like BOE policy 1110-7 and statutes such as [711-1106](#), which mandate a safe working environment. The recently introduced Code of Conduct fails to address the gaps, as its redundant and poorly executed rollout has resulted in inconsistent implementation across schools.

HB616 directly addresses this alarming gap by requiring the DOE and Public Charter Schools to establish clear, enforceable response protocols when harassment occurs. This bill will mandate formal investigations into reported incidents to ensure accountability. It will also require timely reporting to law enforcement when necessary to address incidents effectively. Additionally, the bill calls for the development of emergency safety plans to protect employees at risk. Lastly, it ensures that employees pursuing legal action, such as Temporary Restraining Orders, receive the necessary assistance.

Educators should not have to fear for their safety while fulfilling their duty to nurture and educate Hawai‘i’s youth. The responsibility to create and maintain a safe, respectful environment for both staff and students rests with our state leadership. Passing HB616 is a vital step toward reinforcing that commitment and ensuring consistency, equity, and protection for all educational workers.

As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once wrote, “Be a thermostat, not a thermometer.” It is time for action. We must actively shape justice rather than passively accept injustice. I urge you to be the thermostat of change, ensuring that Hawai‘i’s educators receive the protection and dignity they deserve.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to supporting our educational community. I respectfully ask for your support in passing HB616

Inger Stonehill

HB-616

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 11:53:36 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsay Chambers	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I submit this testimony in support of HB616, which provides essential protections for educational workers who have suffered harassment in the course of their employment.

The victims of harassment in our education system remain invisible. While we may not have visible scars, the emotional and psychological impact is profound. This trauma not only impacts our families, but it also often leads to significant long-term health consequences, such as chronic sleep disturbances, eating disorders, and severe anxiety. Educators across our state endure persistent harassment, yet there is no clear process in place to protect them when they come forward. The consequences are real, ongoing, and deeply damaging.

A prime example of this ongoing issue is a known perpetrator who has targeted educational workers repeatedly. In total, 30 temporary restraining orders (TROs) have been filed against him, according to eCourt Kokua, with 11 of those filed in the last four years by educational workers. In my case, the court found the threat credible enough to issue an injunction against harassment.

Most recently, one victim shared that the same perpetrator harassed them in front of their students. Yet, like many others, they chose not to pursue legal action. For some of the victims this is due to a lack of resources, fear for their safety, concerns about retaliation, and the absence of support from the DOE. As a result, they remain silent and unprotected.

In 2022, the DOE introduced HB2125 to address harassment of educational workers, with testimonies highlighting the widespread nature of the issue (view the testimony here, <https://bit.ly/3CjiNmh>). Despite this acknowledgement, the DOE has failed to take action to address the problem efficiently. The issue is clear: the DOE refuses to act. This isn't about creating new policies, it's about enforcing those already in place, such as BOE Policy 1110-7 and state laws like §711-1106 that address incidents of harassment. The real problem is the DOE's unwillingness to establish an effective and consistent response procedure systemwide.

There is a clear and obvious precedent for action. The Department of Human Resources Development's Workplace Violence Action Plan addresses similar scenarios, stating that any disruptive behavior, intimidation, or violence in the workplace, including from outsiders, is prohibited and must be addressed immediately. Yet when it comes to educational workers, this standard is not upheld, and the responsibility for their safety does not seem to fall on the Superintendent or DOE leadership.

Current and past victims continue to suffer in silence, enduring a torturous reality with no meaningful recourse. The message from the DOE and many leaders at the Board of Education, past and present, is unmistakable – they do not care. But you, as legislators, have the power to change that. By introducing HB616, you are giving victims a seat at the table, a chance to be part of the solution that was denied when I was victimized – first by the perpetrator who threatened me and my family, then by department leadership that failed to protect me.

HB616, a streamlined version of HB1651 from the 2024 legislative session, cuts through the excuses the DOE used to justify inaction. It doesn't call for new full-time positions or heavier penalties; it simply requires the DOE to establish a response procedure and provide comprehensive training for school and district leaders.

When the executive branch fails to protect its own employees, laws are necessary to ensure accountability, particularly when it comes to the safety of teachers and students. If everyone followed the rules, something as simple as wearing a seatbelt or not stealing, we wouldn't need laws. But when that doesn't happen, laws safeguard us. The Legislature has already mandated response procedures and incident reporting for other safety matters, so the need for this law is clear.

What is the threshold for action? Do we wait until an educator is killed before this issue gets the media attention and legislative urgency it deserves? By passing HB616, you have the opportunity to protect the educators who dedicate their lives to shaping the future of our children. You have the power to ensure accountability and provide the protections that are long overdue.

HB-616

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 7:07:33 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

As a concerned citizen I wanted to add my support to all the educators of this great state. I believe HB616 is a great start for ensuring the safety to our most cherished professionals. It should be obvious to everyone that their safety produces not only creates a stress free environment for them and our children but also creates an environment for our children to succeed. I see HB616 as an investment in our children's education system and if we can't invest in or support them then maybe we should just cross our fingers and just pray for the best and close our eyes and pretend we had no clue if our prayers go unanswered. There are far too many examples in our country where violence erupts in our education system and the frequency is only increasing, so let's open our eyes and confront this challenge head on so that our children don't have to.

HB-616

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 9:38:27 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Vegas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because teachers have the right to work in an environment that is free from harassment and fear. I know some teachers who have left the profession because nothing significant was done to ensure the safety of the teachers.

HB-616

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:23:14 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ivana Crumpton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to strongly advocate for the passage of House Bill (HB) 616 and urge you to support this essential legislation that will protect Hawai'i's dedicated educators and staff from ongoing harassment and workplace intimidation. HB616 directly addresses this critical issue by requiring the Department of Education and Public Charter Schools to establish clear, enforceable protocols for responding to harassment. This bill mandates thorough investigations into reported incidents to ensure accountability, and it also requires timely law enforcement notification when necessary to address these situations appropriately. Furthermore, HB616 calls for the creation of emergency safety plans to safeguard at-risk employees and ensures that those pursuing legal actions, such as Temporary Restraining Orders, receive the support they need. Educators should never have to fear for their safety while carrying out their vital role in shaping Hawai'i's future. It is the responsibility of our state leadership to foster a safe and respectful environment for both staff and students. Passing HB616 is a crucial step toward reinforcing this responsibility and ensuring fair protection for all educational workers.

HB-616

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 11:51:24 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aimee Takaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Rep Amato, Rep Evslin, Rep Garrett, Rep Kapela, Rep Kila, Rep Olds, Rep Sayama, Rep Muraoka, and Rep Souza of the Committee on Education along with Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Rep Amato, Rep Chun, Rep Marten, Rep Olds, Rep Takenouchi, Rep Alcos, and Rep Garcia of the Committee on Health,

I am writing to express my **strong support** for House Bill 616 which seeks to enhance the safety of education workers. As a dedicated educator at Myron B Thompson Academy (PCS), I have witnessed firsthand the challenges that education workers face in providing a safe and effective learning environment for students while also ensuring our own safety. These issues not only compromise the physical safety of staff members and faculty but also negatively impact their mental well-being, which in turn affects the quality of education provided to all students.

This bill is crucial in addressing the increasing incidents of violence, harassment, and other safety concerns that affect education professionals in their daily work. I had to file a harassment complaint this year due to harassment sustained at work. Other educators in my district have had to file Temporary Restraining Orders (TROs), some have left their positions for safer campuses and work environments. Not only do we have to contend with the normal stressors that come with the job on top of doing our duties, but a growing number of us also have to deal with parents that cross the line into harassment and threatening behavior. Personally, I fear for not only my safety but that of my family because of the targeted language and threats made by a parent.

Harassment can and does interfere directly with the day-to-day operations of school. There have been multiple incidents of parents interrupting classes with outbursts. There have been multiple incidents of parents berating and swearing at staff on campus. All of these have occurred with a Code of Conduct in place. The Code of Conduct is not enough to protect us from harassment and certainly not enough to help us feel safe and secure at work. It is not enough to ensure our students will be safe at school.

To be clear, this bill is not about silencing parents that have concerns about their children's education. This bill is about protecting education workers from individuals that threaten and harass education workers. We deal with concerned parents as part of our job. We welcome the dialogue and discourse. We do not welcome and should not be subjected to threats made towards

us and our families. We do not welcome and should not be subjected to individuals driving by our homes at 2a.

I urge the committee to support HB616 to protect those who dedicate their lives to educating the next generation. The safety of education workers is not just a professional issue; it is a human rights issue, and it is imperative that we take steps to safeguard those who care for and guide our children. We should have a safe working environment. We should not be afraid to come to work.

Thank you for your consideration.

HB-616

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 12:17:43 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacey Waterhouse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Jacey Waterhouse, reaffirm my strong support for HB1651 and stand by the key points outlined in my testimony submitted in February and March of 2024.

Gaining a true understanding of the severity of this issue requires firsthand experience. Without having faced a threatening situation, it is difficult to fully grasp its profound impact on personal and professional well-being, as well as the safety of colleagues and students.

It is essential to recognize that these incidents are not isolated. The concerns voiced by educators across multiple districts highlight the pressing need for action to protect all stakeholders.

Given the ongoing nature of these safety challenges, I remain steadfast in my original testimony and urge you to give this critical matter the careful attention it deserves.

Testimony submitted in March, 2024:

I, Jacey Waterhouse, reiterate my strong support for HB1651 and reaffirm the points outlined in my testimony submitted on February 22, 2024.

Understanding the gravity of the situation requires firsthand experience. Without having been in a threatening scenario, it's challenging to grasp the full extent of its impact on personal and professional well-being, as well as that of colleagues and students.

It's crucial to recognize that incidents like these aren't isolated occurrences. Concerns raised by educators across various districts underscore the urgent need for action to ensure the safety and security of all stakeholders.

Given the persistent nature of these safety concerns, I stand firm in my original testimony and earnestly request that you give due consideration to this vital matter.

Testimony submitted on February 22, 2024

I, Jacey Waterhouse, fully support HB1651 as it seeks to safeguard and protect the well-being of educators employed by the Department of Education or a Public Charter School, as well as the students and families who are part of these educational institutions. As an employee of Myron B. Thompson Academy (MBTA), a New Century Charter School, I have personally witnessed and experienced the detrimental effects of persistent and severe harassment in various aspects of our professional and personal lives, both within and outside the classroom environment. Here are some of the challenges we face:

1. **Maintaining a Professional Environment:** Despite our efforts to maintain professionalism, verbal harassment persists in various forms such as during meetings, through voice messages, phone calls, and email communications.
2. **Ensuring a Safe Learning Environment:** MBTA, being a hybrid school, must address safety concerns both in-person and virtually. Unscheduled parent interruptions, outbursts, and harassment during virtual classes via Zoom pose significant risks to the safety and well-being of students, staff, and other stakeholders.
3. **Supporting Students:** Students who witness verbal harassment and disruptions during virtual classes or on-campus incidents require support to navigate these challenging situations. Additionally, addressing the social and academic impact on the children of harassing parents is crucial.
4. **Mental and Psychological Impact:** The constant exposure to extreme swearing, name-calling, threats, ranting, and intimidation takes a toll on our mental and psychological well-being, leading to anxiety and other concerns.
5. **Physical Safety Concerns:** There is genuine worry about the physical safety of everyone associated with MBTA, including staff, students, families, and myself, due to threats of physical harm.

Failure to address these escalating concerns and provide adequate protection for educators in Hawaii's educational system will undermine the integrity of the Department of Education and the Public Charter School Commission. Moreover, it sends the wrong message to students and families about acceptable behavior in an educational setting.

I urge the legislature to prioritize the passage of HB 1651. By doing so, educational workers can fulfill their duties without fear of harassment or intimidation, ultimately contributing to a safer and more conducive learning environment for our community as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration.

HB-616

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 12:47:29 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
NOELLE TAVARES-SUMIYE	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Noelle Tavares-Sumiye, reaffirm my strong support for HB616 and stand by the key points outlined in my testimony submitted in February and March of 2024.

Gaining a true understanding of the severity of this issue requires firsthand experience. Without having faced a threatening situation, it is difficult to fully grasp its profound impact on personal and professional well-being, as well as the safety of colleagues and students.

It is essential to recognize that these incidents are not isolated. The concerns voiced by educators across multiple districts highlight the pressing need for action to protect all stakeholders.

Given the ongoing nature of these safety challenges, I remain steadfast in my original testimony and urge you to give this critical matter the careful attention it deserves.

Testimony submitted in March, 2024:

I, Noelle Tavares-Sumiye, reiterate my strong support for HB1651 and reaffirm the points outlined in my testimony submitted on February 22, 2024.

Understanding the gravity of the situation requires firsthand experience. Without having been in a threatening scenario, it's challenging to grasp the full extent of its impact on personal and professional well-being, as well as that of colleagues and students.

It's crucial to recognize that incidents like these aren't isolated occurrences. Concerns raised by educators across various districts underscore the urgent need for action to ensure the safety and security of all stakeholders.

Given the persistent nature of these safety concerns, I stand firm in my original testimony and earnestly request that you give due consideration to this vital matter.

Testimony submitted on February 22, 2024

I, Noelle Tavares-Sumiye, fully support HB1651 as it seeks to safeguard and protect the well-being of educators employed by the Department of Education or a Public Charter School, as well as the students and families who are part of these educational institutions. As an employee of Myron B. Thompson Academy (MBTA), a New Century Charter School, I have personally witnessed and experienced the detrimental effects of persistent and severe harassment in various aspects of our professional and personal lives, both within and outside the classroom environment. Here are some of the challenges we face:

1. **Maintaining a Professional Environment:** Despite our efforts to maintain professionalism, verbal harassment persists in various forms such as during meetings, through voice messages, phone calls, and email communications.
2. **Ensuring a Safe Learning Environment:** MBTA, being a hybrid school, must address safety concerns both in-person and virtually. Unscheduled parent interruptions, outbursts, and harassment during virtual classes via Zoom pose significant risks to the safety and well-being of students, staff, and other stakeholders.
3. **Supporting Students:** Students who witness verbal harassment and disruptions during virtual classes or on-campus incidents require support to navigate these challenging situations. Additionally, addressing the social and academic impact on the children of harassing parents is crucial.
4. **Mental and Psychological Impact:** The constant exposure to extreme swearing, name-calling, threats, ranting, and intimidation takes a toll on our mental and psychological well-being, leading to anxiety and other concerns.
5. **Physical Safety Concerns:** There is genuine worry about the physical safety of everyone associated with MBTA, including staff, students, families, and myself, due to threats of physical harm.

Failure to address these escalating concerns and provide adequate protection for educators in Hawaii's educational system will undermine the integrity of the Department of Education and the Public Charter School Commission. Moreover, it sends the wrong message to students and families about acceptable behavior in an educational setting.

I urge the legislature to prioritize the passage of HB 1651. By doing so, educational workers can fulfill their duties without fear of harassment or intimidation, ultimately contributing to a safer and more conducive learning environment for our community as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration.

HB-616

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 1:46:08 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/30/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Uyeda-Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Kim Uyeda-Young, reaffirm my strong support for HB616 and stand by the key points outlined in my testimony submitted in February and March of 2024.

Gaining a true understanding of the severity of this issue requires firsthand experience. Without having faced a threatening situation, it is difficult to fully grasp its profound impact on personal and professional well-being, as well as the safety of colleagues and students.

It is essential to recognize that these incidents are not isolated. The concerns voiced by educators across multiple districts highlight the pressing need for action to protect all stakeholders.

Given the ongoing nature of these safety challenges, I remain steadfast in my original testimony and urge you to give this critical matter the careful attention it deserves.