



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

Date: 02/12/2025

Time: 10:01 AM

Location: CR 211 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Ways and Means

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: SB 1391, SD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for teacher-requested classroom supplies. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) strongly supports SB1391 SD1.

Through an existing public-private partnership, the Department is able to provide teachers and students with financial resources to fund teacher-led projects for their classroom.

Through our public-private partnership, the Department is able to receive matching funds from individual donors, corporate partners, and foundation partners. Since 2007, 45,055 projects have been funded for 11,072 teachers. Of which, 21,208 projects have been funded for 8,035 teachers with Department funds. With the \$3,000,000 appropriation (and funds matched by donors), the Department estimates it may be able to fund 8,000 more projects next school year. The Department will have 13,000 teachers in the school year 2025-2026.

Funding to continue this program will support teachers with providing books, computers and tablets, art supplies, educational kits and games, lab equipment and other resources that they would not otherwise be able to purchase on their own.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB1391 SD1.



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TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: **SB 1391 SD 1 - TEACHER-REQUESTED CLASSROOM SUPPLIES**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Hearing: **2/12/2025, Conference Room 211, 10:01am**

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

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association stands in strong support of SB 1391 SD 1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Education for teacher-requested classroom supplies for fiscal years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

When adjusted for cost-of-living, Hawai'i's teachers are some of the lowest paid educators in the nation. However, our educators have hearts that are much larger than their paychecks, and regularly purchase items like art supplies, notebooks, and food for students with their own money. In fact, a January 2023 survey reported that HSTA members "spend an average of \$953 out of pocket a year on supplies."

DonorsChoose.org is an incredible resource for teachers to get the exact supplies they need, fast. Many teachers have shared their frustration with the Department of Education's purchasing process that often won't allow teachers to get the supplies they want most, without jumping through extensive bureaucracy. The "No Gatekeepers" model exemplified with DonorsChoose.org honors teachers as professionals who can be trusted to make their own classroom decisions.

We trust educators to know what their students need to thrive in our state's classrooms. Therefore, this bill is a step in the right direction to help teachers get needed classroom supplies. The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



SENATE BILL 1391, SD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION

FEBRUARY 12, 2025 · WAM HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** SB 1391, SD1, relating to education, which appropriates funds to the Department of Education for teacher-requested classroom supplies.

According to the National School Supply and Equipment Association, public school teachers annually spend \$1.6 billion of their discretionary income on supplementary school supplies and instructional materials. On average, teachers surveyed spent a total of \$485 on school supplies and instructional materials, with more than 10 percent spending over \$1,000 of personal income each school year to educate their keiki. **Those figures have risen as inflation has gotten worse. In September of 2024, our state's inflation rate was 4.2 percent, roughly 1.8 percent higher than the national inflation rate.**

That trend is, if anything, worse in Hawai'i, which consistently ranks at the bottom in national teacher compensation studies. Pay cuts, rising health care costs, adjusted insurance co-pays, and the loss of the state's \$1,690-per-special-education-teacher classroom supply fund have all aggravated the financial burden borne by teachers' pocketbooks. In a recent survey conducted by HSTA, 47 percent of respondents cited personal expenditures between \$250 and \$500 each

year on classroom supplies, with many claiming expenditures in excess of \$1,000. Lawmakers must take action to lighten their financial load.

Ensuring that educators do not have to pay for their own classroom supplies effectively increases their purchasing power, puts money back into the local economy, and incentivizes the teaching profession at a time when our state's high cost-of-living and low adjusted-average income levels compel many would-be teachers to choose more highly compensated professions or, even worse, leave the state altogether. Today, approximately half of Hawai'i's teachers leave our state's classrooms every five years. Therefore, to recruit and retain quality teachers for our schools, we should provide fiscal incentives that offset the inflationary cost of classroom supplies that support the learning growth of our keiki.

Contact: educationcaucusdph@gmail.com



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

February 11, 2025

Testimony in Support of SB1391 SD1: Relating to Education

To: Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

From: The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 10:01 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Subject: Support for SB1391 SD1 - Relating to Education

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i strongly supports SB1391 SD1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Education for teacher-requested classroom supplies. This measure is vital for ensuring that teachers have the necessary resources to create effective and engaging learning environments for our students.

Key Points:

1. Support for Teachers:

- a. SB1391 SD1 provides much-needed financial support to teachers, enabling them to obtain the classroom supplies they need to enhance their teaching and foster student learning.
- b. By addressing the issue of out-of-pocket expenses for classroom supplies, this bill helps alleviate the financial burden on teachers.

2. Enhancement of Learning Environments:

- a. Adequate classroom supplies are essential for creating dynamic and engaging learning environments.
- b. This measure ensures that students have access to the materials they need for a well-rounded education, including textbooks, art supplies, science equipment, and more.

3. Equity in Education:

- a. Providing funds for classroom supplies promotes equity in education by ensuring that all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have access to the necessary learning tools.
- b. It helps bridge the gap between underfunded schools and those with more resources, promoting a more equitable educational experience for all students.

4. Teacher Retention and Morale:

- a. Supporting teachers with the resources they need can improve teacher morale and job satisfaction.
- b. By reducing the financial strain on teachers, SB1391 SD1 can contribute to better teacher retention rates and a more stable educational workforce.

Arguments in Support:

1. Investing in Education:

- a. Investing in classroom supplies is an investment in the future of Hawai'i's students.
- b. This measure recognizes the importance of providing teachers with the tools they need to deliver high-quality education.

2. Supporting Innovation and Creativity:

- a. Adequate classroom supplies enable teachers to implement innovative and creative teaching methods.
- b. This bill empowers teachers to design and execute engaging lesson plans that can inspire and motivate students.

3. Positive Impact on Student Outcomes:

- a. Access to essential classroom supplies can positively impact student outcomes by enhancing the quality of education.
- b. Well-resourced classrooms can lead to improved academic performance, increased student engagement, and better overall learning experiences.

In conclusion, we urge the Committee to favorably consider SB1391 SD1 and support its passage. This bill represents a significant step towards supporting our teachers, enhancing educational equity, and investing in the future of Hawai'i's students.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick
Co-chairs Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:30:18 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Beltran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Maria Beltran. I am a beginning teacher at Kealakehe High School in West Hawaii School District on the Big Island. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel supported and appreciated. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Receiving classroom supplies through DonorsChoose has made an incredible difference in my students' learning experience and overall classroom environment. With the generous support of donors, I was able to provide essential materials that enhance engagement, organization, and cleanliness in our space.

The bookshelves we received have helped create a more structured and inviting reading area, making it easier for students to access content-related books that support their learning. Having a variety of engaging books has sparked curiosity and encouraged independent reading, which has been instrumental in improving literacy skills.

Additionally, the pens and pencils have ensured that all students have the necessary tools to complete their work without barriers. It's such a relief knowing that no student has to worry about not having something as simple yet essential as a pencil. The chargers we received have also been a game-changer, allowing students to keep their devices powered throughout the day and stay connected to digital learning resources.

The educational posters have brought our walls to life, reinforcing key concepts and creating a visually stimulating learning environment. And thanks to the cleaning supplies, we have been able to maintain a safe and healthy classroom, which is more important than ever.

These supplies have not only relieved financial burdens but have also empowered my students to focus on learning in a well-equipped and inspiring space. I am beyond grateful for the generosity of DonorsChoose and the donors who made this possible. Your support truly makes a lasting impact!

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Respectfully,
Maria Beltran
Social Studies Teacher**

Kealakehe High School

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Madison Zakahi. I am a beginning teacher at Alvah Scott Elementary in the Central District on the island of Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel supported. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

With generous funding from the Department of Education in Hawai'i, I had the privilege to equip my 21 students with essential resources that foster a positive, safe, and collaborative classroom environment. As a first-year teacher, I initially faced significant challenges in gathering the necessary materials for my students. However, the support I received enabled me to acquire various impactful items, including floor cushions to promote flexible seating and enhance collaboration, a welcoming rug for morning greetings and meetings, stools for RTI and small group activities, and a selection of books aimed at nurturing a love for reading from an early age. Additionally, engaging learning games like Splash (Lakeshore) have provided a fun way to reinforce academic skills, while a mobile easel facilitates our morning meetings, small group sessions, and learning centers.

The joy and excitement in my students' eyes as we unboxed these resources are moments I will cherish forever. Thanks to the generosity of our donors and the Department of Education, I am empowered to provide my students with the enriching learning opportunities they rightfully deserve. With ongoing support, educators like myself can continue to create impactful experiences that open doors to success for our students.

Together, we can achieve greatness and ensure that every student receives the high-quality learning experience they deserve.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Madison Zakahi

Alvah Scott Elementary- 2nd grade teacher

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:49:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Kern	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 10, 2025

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah Kern and I am a resident of Lihue, Kauai and a teacher at Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School. I am testifying in strong support of SB1391 to provide funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies. Teachers across the state spend thousands of dollars out of their own pockets every year to purchase a variety of supplies for their students. This financial burden should not be on the teachers, many of whom are working two or even three jobs to make ends meet. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Mahalo nui loa,

Sarah Kern

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:22:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Brummel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kristen Brummel, and I am a former 4th grade teacher, mentor, and currently the Teacher of the Year Program Coordinator and Educational Specialist with the Hawaii Teacher Induction Center. I am writing to express my strong support for SB 1391, a bill that seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE).

As the administrator overseeing the DonorsChoose campaign for new teachers, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative effect of providing resources to our beginning educators. The HIDOE/DonorsChoose partnership has been instrumental in providing much-needed classroom supplies for our new teachers in their critical first and second years.

Direct Impact on Teachers: I have seen how these funds enable teachers to immediately access crucial resources, such as books, learning games, technology, and art supplies. These materials enhance their teaching and create more engaging learning experiences for their students. Without this funding, many teachers would have to spend their own money on these supplies or not have the supplies they need at all.

Empowerment and Support: The program sends a powerful message to our teachers that they are valued and supported. This recognition is crucial for retention and teachers' success. It is incredibly encouraging for them to know that the state is invested in their success and provides the necessary resources to help them. This funding acknowledges the challenges teachers face and provides concrete support to address their needs.

Flexibility and Responsiveness: The DonorsChoose platform allows teachers to select resources tailored to their specific needs, and the program provides them with the flexibility to use the funds when they need them most. This flexibility ensures that the funding is used most effectively for the students.

I know that providing resources to teachers is crucial for their success and retention. By investing in teachers, we are investing in the future of Hawai'i's public schools. If this bill does not pass, we risk losing critical funding for classroom supplies. This could lead to teachers spending more of their own money, fewer resources for students, and greater challenges in creating engaging and effective learning environments.

I urge you to pass SB 1391. Your support will directly impact the success of our teachers and the educational experiences of Hawai'i's students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Kristen Brummel

Educational Specialist, Hawaii Teacher Induction Center

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:08:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Destiny Aulani Avilla	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Destiny Aulani Avilla. I am a beginning teacher at Kalei‘opu‘u Elementary School in the Leeward District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391, which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE).

First, I want to express my deepest gratitude for this incredible initiative. When I began my teaching career, I had a vision of creating a classroom that was not only functional but also engaging, welcoming, and full of opportunities for my students to thrive. However, as a new teacher, I quickly realized how difficult it would be to provide everything I wanted and needed on my own. Thanks to the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, I was able to bring that vision to life. The generosity of this funding allowed me to create a learning space where my students feel safe, excited, and eager to explore every single day.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel supported and empowered. It showed me that my dedication to my students was recognized and that I wasn't alone in wanting the best for them. This initiative didn't just provide materials—it provided confidence, motivation, and the ability to give my students experiences they wouldn't have had otherwise.

The funding allowed my students to:

- Immediately access crucial resources such as classroom furniture, technology, organizational tools, and hands-on learning materials, which transformed my classroom into an efficient, engaging, and beautiful space for learning.
- Experience lessons with high-quality materials that foster creativity, curiosity, and a love for learning.
- Benefit from a well-equipped classroom that helps me, as their teacher, provide effective instruction without worrying about gaps in resources.

Without this support, I wouldn't have been able to build the classroom my students deserve. My first years of teaching have been successful in large part due to this funding, and I know that future educators will benefit just as much—if not more—if this initiative continues.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing SB 1391, ensuring that teachers have the resources they need to provide high-quality education for Hawai'i's students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Destiny Aulani Avilla

Kindergarten Teacher, Kalei'opu'u Elementary School

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:09:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391/ HB 1072

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bryan Silver. I am a teacher at Kalani High School in Kaimuki Distric on Oahu and the 2025 Hawai'i State Teacher of the Year. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 / HB 1072 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel appreciated by the department and trusted that we could choose what we know is impactful to our students. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Explore the world a of blending coding with mechatronics. Students were making robots come "alive" Our class was not just learning about coding and making things happen on a computer screen they were able to take found objects and combine it with Micro:bits a small computer processor and write language that make it come alive not just in the mids of my students but through action they watched their creations kick, crawl, walk, and flop around. The uproarias laughter and excitement you could feel the students believed they could do anything. It is through Intiatives like the DonorsChoose funding that helped make that possible. I know of dozens of projects funded over the years that have seen that special project take shape out of a classroom and students got to see, feel, build and hear ideas come alive, from the pages of a book to the possible, 3D printing, gardens, rocket ships and boats to sail.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Respectfully,
Bryan Silver**

Career Technical Education - Engineering

2025 Hawai'i State Teacher of the Year

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:11:08 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Tenn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

Aloha, my name is Sherry Tenn. I am a Natural Resources CTE teacher at Waipahu High School in the Leeward District on Oahu and the 2025 Waipahu / Pearl City Complex Area Teacher of the Year. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 / HB 1072 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel valued and understood as a public school educator in Hawaii. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding enabled my students to develop their entrepreneurial project ideas by creating value-added products from the plants they cultivated. One standout idea focused on promoting awareness and appreciation of native Hawaiian plants. The students pressed and dried leaves and flowers, incorporating them into unique button designs for others to enjoy. Thanks to DonorsChoose funding, I was able to purchase a button maker, allowing students to launch their own mini business. This hands-on experience guided them through product development, financing, marketing, and more—bringing their vision to life and making a lasting impact on their learning.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Sherry Tenn

Waipahu High School

Academy of Natural Resources Director

Natural Resources CTE Teacher

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 5:04:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shanika Mae Isagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391/HB 1072

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Shanika Mae Isagan. I am a beginning teacher at Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary School in Hawaii DOE in Oahu. I submit this testimony with a full heart in strong support of SB 1391 / HB 1072, which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm not just here to advocate for a bill; I'm here to share a story of how the HDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and the generosity it unlocked, transformed my first year of teaching and the lives of my students.

My first year was a whirlwind. The joy of connecting with students, witnessing those "aha!" moments, was immense. But so was the struggle. Like many new teachers, I faced the challenge of limited resources, constantly dipping into my own meager salary to provide even the basics. There was always the nagging feeling of "not enough," a sense that I wasn't giving my students everything they deserved. I felt like I was scrambling, trying to piece together engaging lessons with whatever I could find. It was exhausting, and at times, disheartening.

Then, the boxes arrived. They weren't just boxes; they were a beacon of hope in my classroom. Inside, nestled amongst the packing peanuts, were treasures I could only have dreamed of. Wobble chairs, perfect for my wiggly learners who struggled to sit still. A beautiful, oversized globe, inviting my students to explore the world beyond our small town. Stacks of books, bursting with stories and knowledge, promising to ignite a love of reading. Even the simple things, like pencils and notebooks, felt like gifts. It was as if someone had seen my struggles, understood my students' needs, and answered my silent plea.

Mixed in with the essentials were delightful surprises: fidget toys to help anxious hands find focus, calculators to empower my budding mathematicians, and a vibrant rainbow of art supplies just waiting to unleash the creative spirit within each child. And then, there were the snacks. A small gesture, perhaps, but for some of my students, a much-needed boost to get them through the day. Unpacking it all, I was overcome with emotion. It wasn't just about the *things*; it was about the feeling of being seen, of being supported, of knowing that someone cared. It was a tangible expression of belief in me, in my students, and in the power of education.

I stayed late, arranging everything, picturing the looks on my students' faces when they saw their transformed classroom. I thought of the donors, the people I'd never met, who had chosen to invest in my students' futures. Their kindness was a tangible gift, a reminder that I wasn't alone in this journey. My first year was challenging, but those boxes, filled with belief, made all the difference. They gave my students the tools they needed to learn, grow, and thrive. And they gave me the encouragement I needed to keep going, to keep believing in the power of teaching. I urge you to continue this vital support by passing SB 1391 / HB 1072.

Thank you.

Respectfully,
Shanika Mae Isagan
6th Grade Teacher – Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary School

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 6:59:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Konelio C Alofaituli	Testifying for Moanalua High School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair: Senator Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Konelio Alofaituli. I am a beginning teacher at Moanalua High School in the AMR Complex in Salt Lake, Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel empowered. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to express their learning through podcasts. The equipment allowed students to produce high quality audio and video recordings. Students were excited to have the means to experience the trendy form of journalism. The donation afforded the class a sound board, quality microphones, stands, headphones, cables, and a green screen set.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Respectfully,
Konelio Alofaituli
Moanalua High School
English Teacher**

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Risa Mathews. I am a beginning teacher at Aiea Intermediate in Central District on O'ahu Island. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel empowered. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

As the students I serve often live in public housing in multigenerational households, they are sometimes unable to get basic necessities. I am a firm believer that learning does not start in the classroom until a student's basic needs are met, as demonstrated by Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. The funding allowed my students to have access to basic necessities within my classroom. I have built a classroom closet with the help of DonorsChoose that allows me to supply students with fresh socks, deodorant, toothbrushes, hair ties, feminine hygiene products, and snacks. I have had great success in this classroom closet and have been able to support many of my students, even if they are not ones that I teach.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Risa Mathews
7th Grade EL ELA Teacher
'Aiea Intermediate

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:01:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Perreira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB 1391

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Karen Perreira, and I am a beginning teacher at Chiefess Kamakahahelei Middle School in the Kauai District on the Island of Kauai. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391, which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE).

I am deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose. This initiative has had a tremendous positive impact on my classroom, providing essential resources that I would not have been able to afford otherwise.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel valued as a new employee, supported as a new teacher, and empowered to make a strong start. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, recognizing the unique challenges we face in our first years, and ensuring we have the tools needed to succeed.

Through this funding, my students were able to immediately access crucial resources. The materials helped me purchase basic classroom necessities such as a pencil sharpener, a paper cutter, and student supplies like pencils, personal whiteboards, and markers. Additionally, I was able to acquire graphic novels to support independent reading. These resources were especially critical for my English Language Learner (ELL) classroom, where many students come from low-income backgrounds and would otherwise struggle to obtain these basic learning tools. Having access to these supplies has enhanced student engagement, supported language development, and created a more equitable learning environment.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing SB 1391. Ensuring that teachers have access to necessary classroom resources will directly benefit student learning and success.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Sincerely,
Karen Perreira

Teacher, Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School
Kauai District

RE: SB [1391/ HB 1072]

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Desha Abe. I am a beginning Special Education/ELA teacher at Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School in Kauai District on Kauai. I am submitting testimony in strong support of [SB 1391 / HB 1072] which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel as though I am actually supporting my students and their needs, at the levels that they need. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to explore places and worlds they have never known. They are able to stretch way past the edges of our island and see things, places, and experience things that many of them can only dream about. CKMS is in a district with Title 1 funding, meaning that more than half of our students come from families that are under the poverty line. With these projects that I have put through and the funding we have received through these bills, students that come from families that are working all the time and do not have consistent adults to support them, we have been able to help increase Lexile reading levels, grow their imagination, and show them that we do believe that they can reach beyond the stars. I have redesigned my classroom with flexible seating options for my high need students that need to move their bodies while they think and learn. I have created a class library where anyone has access to books that are at their grade level and higher, to ensure that their imaginations are in use at all times. I have gotten under the desk pedalers for students who struggle to sit still, and to support their physical movement goals, all while they absorb the information and think at their higher levels because they are not stuck behind a desk, and we have a safe space. I have found many book series for students who claim they "hate reading" and now have waiting lists for students who are excited for the next book to be released! I have gotten support and materials to take our ELA classes outside so we can focus on the ART piece of English Language Arts and students can create things with their hands to inspire their writing. These are things that would not be possible if we did not receive the funding from the DOE to support these projects. Our students desperately need to be shown that education is not only the most important gift they can be given, but they need to understand that we, as teachers, believe in them and their ability to grow into amazing individuals, so they can leave our island, get more education and experience, and then hopefully come back and teach the next generation of keiki.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Desha Abe
6th Grade ELA/Special Education

Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School

Desha.Abe@k12.hi.us

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SB973

Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jenny Anne Villanueva. I am a teacher at Wilcox Elementary School in Kauai School District on Kauai Island. I am submitting testimony in support of SB 973, which seeks to establish and fund salary differentials for teachers who provide direct services to English learners (ELs).

This is my first year teaching ELL at this school. They had to hire a second line due to the high number of ELL students at this school, and it is only increasing. There are only two people working together in the ELL department, and we are in charge of servicing the whole school. To ensure we are providing services to all 62 ELL students in the school, we must stretch ourselves to great lengths so we know each student is provided with the language support they need to succeed. Not only are we in charge of creating our own curriculum and teaching it for Grades K-5, but we are also filling the roles of other professions. For example, we are translators for families of multiple languages, we are advocates for families and students to get ample support and recognition, we are social workers constantly having to contact families (majority of students come from low-income households with unstable means of communication and transportation.) TESOL certified teachers are hard to find but are necessary for schools to provide the best support possible to their students.

This legislation is a necessary step toward addressing the shortage of qualified teachers and ensuring that our multilingual students receive the high-quality instruction and support they need to succeed academically.

These students face unique challenges in acquiring academic English while keeping pace with their peers. Research consistently shows that well-trained teachers play a crucial role in closing the achievement gap for these learners. However, the persistent shortage of qualified teachers has made it difficult to provide consistent, high-quality support.

By offering a pay differential, this bill will attract and retain skilled teachers in this essential field. Competitive compensation rewards the specialized training and expertise required to effectively support English learners and will lead to increased teacher retention and less turnover. Investing in our teachers directly benefits students, schools, and communities by promoting educational equity and improving long-term academic outcomes.

For these reasons, I urge the Legislature to pass this bill and fully fund the proposed pay differentials. Doing so will help ensure that Hawaii's multilingual learners receive the educational opportunities they deserve, while also strengthening the state's commitment to an inclusive and effective public education system.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,
Jenny Anne Villanueva
EL Teacher

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:40:25 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heidi Gallagher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391/ HB 1072

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Heidi Gallagher. I am a probationary level teacher at Holualoa Elementary in HKKK on Hawaii Island. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 / HB 1072 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel a sense of peace and resiliency. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Have the opportunity to develop their language and literacy skills through evidence based practices of multisensory learning. Our young students need multiple opportunities to manipulate the sounds and features of a word when learning to read and write, and the opportunity to maintain a classroom environment which fosters this is a gift. We were also able to set up other learning stations for my interactive learning for the students with the funding provided through donors choose.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,
Heidi Gallagher, MS Ed, M Ed
EL Coordinator/Teacher, Holualoa Elementary School

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:15:41 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katie Jacintho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Katie Jacintho. I am a beginning teacher at Maui High School in the BKM complex area on Maui. I am submitting testimony in fervent support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE).

I could not do my job effectively without the help and support of Donor’s Choose and the HIDOE partnerships. Last year, I was able to purchase fidget toys to help my students focus, along with books for our Shakespeare curriculum. In addition to these materials, I was also able to purchase supplies for classroom celebrations, and snacks for hungry students. None of these things would have been provided without the generous donations I received through Donor’s Choose, and HIDOE’s partnership with the company. In total, I received \$2,713 in funding. If I had provided these materials out of my own pocket, it would take saving 3 entire paychecks to do so.

This year, I increased my funding through Donor’s Choose by securing funding for personalized Burn After Writing journals for each student, along with other materials for classroom success. These journals and class supplies have been invaluable to help boost student writing skills, and integrate important SEL benchmarks into the curriculum. In addition, just within the first semester, I also purchased snacks and microwavable food to help alleviate childhood hunger in my classroom. As of January, I also received funding for thank you letters we will write at the end of the school year. All of this totaled \$3,063, and I’m still submitting projects for review to complete our school year. All of these requests fall outside of my department budget money, and way outside the \$300 we’ve received at the beginning of the school year.

Without HIDOE’s partnership with Donor’s Choose, my students would not have pencils to write with. They would not have snacks throughout the day or have microwavable meals they can take home. They would have no paper to write with, they would have no tissues to blow their nose. They would have to share books for class reading and provide their own

materials for all class projects. This—in a world where even teachers do not make a living wage, where our students are often working 2 jobs not for themselves, but so they can contribute to household finances. This—in a world where the 14th Amendment guarantees a right to free public education, but we’ve seen firsthand how that right is not always executed effectively. HIDOE’s partnership with Donor’s Choose allows my students to have full access to the content of my classroom so they can concentrate on the learning itself rather than worrying about how they will access the learning without their own pencils or paper, or even without the worry of their stomach growling from skipping meals.

HIDOE’s partnership with Donor’s Choose shows their commitment to each student in Hawaii’s classrooms and their investment in our students’ education. In addition, these partnerships help students meet their basic needs. I don’t know many teachers who aren’t using Donor’s Choose to buy food for their students.

As a beginning teacher, I have a unique position to see what these partnerships do as well. Without the support of HIDOE and Donor’s Choose, I would not be able to provide these things out of pocket. It is ridiculous that in a state where beginning teachers do not make a livable wage, we are expected to provide thousands of dollars out of pocket, just so our students have fair access to education. No teacher wants to leave their students with no materials and an empty belly, but the choice for most beginning teachers is paying our own rent and groceries, versus buying supplies for our students. It’s an impossible choice in an industry where no one gets into it for the money, and we’re all here because we love our students.

I implore you: please continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill. It will ensure that teachers have access to the resources they need to help foster an effective, highly engaging learning environment. In addition, and most importantly, this money has a direct impact on our students and their success. If we want to build a strong community, we must start from the ground up, and that starts in our classrooms, with our keiki.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 1391.

**Respectfully,
Katie Jacintho**

ELA 12 teacher at Maui High School

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:59:44 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yi Chun Louie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair [Senate- Dela Cruz] and Members of the Committee,

My name is Yi Chun Louie. I am a beginning teacher at Mililani High School in Mililani on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of [SB 1391] which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel appreciated. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Have instant access to essential materials like art supplies, school supplies, and rewards. This made a significant impact on my students, as they were able to engage more deeply in lessons, develop their creativity, and feel motivated and recognized for their achievements.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Respectfully,
Yi Chun Louie**

Chinese Teacher/Mililani High School

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:48:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nachelle Wai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nachelle Wai. I am a beginning teacher at Kapunahala Elementary in Windeward District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel supported, cared for, and offers help. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel supported and cared for. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

During my first year of teaching, I was able to use this funding to purchase essential supplies, such as books, which I did not have ahead of time. These resources gave my students the opportunity to read regularly and improve their fluency, helping many of them reach and even exceed the benchmark of 100 words per minute. The progress they made was incredible to witness and directly tied to having access to the right materials.

Additionally, the funding allowed me to set up my classroom in a way that I wouldn't have been able to afford otherwise. As a new teacher, I didn't have the extra money to buy classroom items, but this support made it possible to create a themed, welcoming environment that got my students excited to come to class and eager to learn.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Respectfully,
Nachelle Wai**

3rd Grade Teacher

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:23:27 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexia Iwamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alexia Iwamoto. I am a beginning teacher at Waiakea Elementary School in the Hilo/Waiakea Complex on the Big Island. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE meant the world to me. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

Thanks to the contribution, I was able to buy classroom supplies for the to enrich my students' learning and classroom environment. I've gotten fun things like pool noodles, which have become a favorite tool for our drumming brain breaks. They provide a fun and engaging way for our students to release energy and stay focused.

The donation allowed me to buy healthy snacks for our students, ensuring they have the fuel they need to learn and grow, plastic art trays, a mobile whiteboard, recess equipment, art and STEM supplies, and so much more. These things create memories for the students that will stay with them for years.

This generosity has had a direct and positive impact on our students' education. We teachers are truly grateful for the support and the difference this has made in our lives.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Respectfully,
Alexia Iwamoto**

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jezrae Richelle M. Balinbin I am a beginning teacher at Honowai Elementary School in the Leeward District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of [SB 1391] which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel over filled with joy. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

I am incredibly grateful for the generous donation of school supplies and furniture for my 4th-grade classroom. As an educator working with low-income students, these donations have made a tremendous difference in creating a supportive and enriching environment for all of my students, especially those in special education. The new furniture such as differentiated seating of floor chairs and pillows helps accommodate their needs, ensuring they have the space and comfort required to focus and engage in their learning. The supplies provide, like the fidget toys, paints and other art supplies are essential tools that allow us to explore creative and hands-on activities that are so important for fostering growth. This donation not only lightens the financial burden but also uplifts my students' spirits, reinforcing that they are valued and capable of achieving great things. Thank you for making this possible and for investing in their futures!

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Mahalo Nui,
Jezrae Richelle M. Balinbin
4th Grade Teacher at Honowai Elementary School

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 5:32:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maha Ramos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391 / HB 1072

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Maha Ramos. I am a beginning teacher at Helemen Elementary in the Central District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 / HB 1072, which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel excited and happy for my students. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my preschoolers to:

- Have access to sensory materials, such as wiggle seats, weighted toys, sensory bin fillers, and paint, which has provided them with necessary sensory input to focus and have hands-on learning experiences.
- Have a calm corner to safely go to when they are having big feelings or just to learn about their emotions; where they have access to age-appropriate supplies such as books on emotions, timers, fidgets, and breathing guides.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,
Maha Ramos
SPED Preschool Teacher

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:12:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris Nicholas	Testifying for Ways And Means Committee	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS
RE: SB 1391

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Chris Nicholas. I am a special education teacher in a Fully Self-Contained (FSC) classroom at Mililani Middle School in the Central District of Oahu, Hawaii. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel incredibly grateful, appreciative, and thankful. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in special education programs, acknowledging the unique needs of our students, and providing the necessary support to help them thrive in their learning environment.

The funding allowed my students to benefit from a comprehensive sensory room and essential learning materials that have dramatically improved their educational experience. Through this support, we were able to create a fully-equipped sensory space featuring specialized items such as a hammock chair, sensory rugs, tents, and puzzle piece couches with bean bags. The addition of exercise ball chairs, gaming chairs, body socks, and sensory tiles has provided our students with crucial tools for self-regulation and sensory integration. Furthermore, the funding enabled us to enhance our life skills program with new culinary equipment, including pots, pans, and utensils, as well as physical fitness items like mini trampolines.

These resources have had a transformative impact on our students' learning experience. The sensory room has become an essential space for students to regulate their emotions, improve focus, and develop coping strategies. The culinary equipment has enabled hands-on learning experiences that build essential life skills and independence. The physical fitness items have supported our students' gross motor development and provided necessary movement breaks throughout the day, leading to improved engagement and participation in classroom activities.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that special education teachers have the resources they need to create effective, adaptive

learning experiences for students with diverse needs. As you all know, being a special education teacher really comes from the heart and is the work of love. But having the necessary and essential funds to support us on our journey and career would be greatly appreciated and will change the lives of these special education children and their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill. I appreciate your time, energy, patience and most of all support!

Respectfully and mahalo.

Chris Nicholas
Special Education Teacher
Mililani Middle School

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:51:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roxane Racquiza Toth	Testifying for Department of Education	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Senate Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Roxane Racquiza B. Toth. I am a beginning teacher at Ka’ewai Elementary School in Honolulu District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel supported and relieved from having to spend my own money to purchase the resources I believed my students needed. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Buy cushion seats for all my students, ensuring they have comfortable seating throughout the school day. These cushion seats have helped create a more positive, focused, and engaging learning environment, contributing to my students' overall well-being and success.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,
Roxane Racquiza Toth

4th Grade Elementary Teacher

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:31:40 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ella OBrien	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ella O'Brien. I am a beginning teacher at Leihoku Elementary in Leeward District on O'ahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel empowered. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to get access to food that allows them to be fueled through the day. Some of my students face food insecurity at home so just knowing that they don't have to face the same insecurity in the classroom has been a huge morale boost and allows students to communicate with me if they are hungry. This gives all my students a more equal opportunity to succeed. Also, many of the games we purchase have increase their strategic thinking skills and have been great supports with behavior management in the classroom.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Respectfully,
Ella O'Brien
5th Grade Teacher, Leihoku Elementary**

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Larson Fairbairn. I am a beginning teacher at Ho'okele Elementary in the Campbell/Kapolei district on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel supported. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Have access to supplies and resources that make their everyday experience within the classroom more engaging and creates a positive learning environment.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,
Larson Fairbairn
3rd Grade Teacher

Ho'okele Elementary

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:42:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Kapalihiwa Bilyeu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391/ HB 1072

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah K. Bilyeu. I am a beginning teacher at Kapa'a High School on Kaua'i. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391/HB 1072 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for needed supplies from the DOE made me feel confident to keep my focus on successfully applying my curriculum without worrying about searching for supplies and paying for them myself. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

In my Hawaiian language class, the funding allowed my students to immediately access crucial resources like language-building books, games, and musical instruments that inspire them to make Hawaiian language a part of their everyday lives.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Respectfully,
Sarah K. Bilyeu
Secondary Teacher, Kapa'a High School**

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:06:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jillian Simon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jillian Simon. I am a beginning teacher at Leilehua High School in the Central District of Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel relieved and appreciative that I was able to get the tools to enhance student learning, ensuring that every student had the resources they needed to succeed and that I could provide the best educational experience possible. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to engage more actively in their learning with doodle boards for interactive activities and scratch work they enjoy using. It also provided candy and prizes to boost motivation, as well as fidget tools for each desk to help students stay focused, limit phone use, and reduce stress, creating a more productive and enjoyable classroom environment. Additionally, the supplies fostered a sense of excitement and ownership in their learning, as students eagerly participated in hands-on activities and felt rewarded for their hard work. With these new tools, I was able to create a more inclusive and dynamic classroom where students could thrive academically and emotionally.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Respectfully,
Jillian Simon
Math Teacher-Leilehua High School**

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:44:45 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eloisa Micah Guabes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of SB1391 SD1
RELATING TO EDUCATION**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Eloisa Micah Guabes, and I am an 8th-grade English Language Arts teacher at Waimea Canyon Middle School. I am writing in strong support of SB1391 SD1, which appropriates funds for teacher-requested classroom supplies. This bill is crucial in ensuring that educators like myself have the necessary tools to provide high-quality education and foster student success.

As a teacher, I have experienced firsthand the challenges of securing essential classroom materials. The funding provided through initiatives like this has allowed me to acquire resources that directly impact student engagement and learning. For example, I was able to secure an **HP Color LaserJet Pro printer**, which has been invaluable in providing printed materials for students who benefit from physical copies of worksheets, graphic organizers, and visual aids. The ability to print in color has made learning materials more engaging, especially for visual learners, helping them better understand literary elements and writing structures.

Additionally, I received **ELA posters** covering grammar rules, parts of speech, and writing strategies. These serve as constant reference points in my classroom, reinforcing key concepts and allowing students to take ownership of their learning. Having these resources readily available has improved student confidence in writing and grammar application.

Moreover, the funding enabled me to acquire **individual whiteboards** for students, facilitating more interactive lessons and real-time feedback. Whether practicing sentence structures, brainstorming ideas for essays, or engaging in peer review activities, these whiteboards have transformed classroom discussions, making learning more dynamic and student-centered.

Beyond the tangible materials, this bill represents a greater commitment to valuing educators and the work we do. When teachers have access to essential supplies, we can focus on what truly matters—delivering meaningful instruction and supporting our students' academic growth. Without adequate funding, many of us are left to purchase materials out of pocket, which is neither sustainable nor fair.

I urge you to support SB1391 SD1 so that teachers across Hawai'i can continue to provide enriched learning experiences for their students. Investing in classroom resources is an investment in the future of education, and I am deeply grateful for the support that has already made a difference in my classroom.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Eloisa Micah Guabes

8th Grade English Language Arts Teacher
Waimea Canyon Middle School

RE: SB 1391

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Nicole Fanelli. I am a beginning teacher at Red Hill Elementary School in Central District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel incredibly valued as an educator. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

As a new teacher, I came into school excited, but also unprepared for everything I would need. Using funds, I was able to stock my classroom with social-emotional learning books, manipulatives and learning materials. I was able to use DonorsChoose to supply my classroom with these essential resources and not spend my own money along the way. The amazing items I received helped to foster a classroom environment where students feel safe, supported, and understood, which is crucial for their overall well-being and academic growth. Investing in programs like this is an investment in our children's future. These resources are not merely supplemental; they are fundamental to creating a well-rounded and effective learning environment. They empower students to develop the social, emotional, and academic skills they need to thrive in school and beyond.

I strongly urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,
Nicole Fanelli
Special Education Teacher

RE: SB 1391

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessie O'Neill-Prest. I am a teacher at Kīhei Elementary in BKKM complex on the island of Maui and the 2025 Baldwin-Kekaulike-Kūlanihāko'i-Maui Complex Area Teacher of the Year. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 / HB 1072 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel inspired. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Have immediate access to art supplies, music equipment, books for the library, and Lego education kits for after school enrichment. This gives them opportunities and exposure to learning skills that spark curiosity and lifelong learning.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Jessie O'Neill-Prest
Curriculum Coordinator

Kīhei Elementary

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ashley Piche. I am a beginning teacher at Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary School in the AMR district on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of [SB 1391] which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel supported and heard. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Have immediate access to engaging levelled readers to foster a love of learning.

Have immediate access to flexible seating to help my students learn and focus.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,
Ashley Piche

First Grade Teacher, Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary School

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:58:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly Hyatt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: SB 1391

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kimberly Hyatt. I am a beginning teacher at Radford High School in Central District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 / HB 1072 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HODOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel excited about the experiences I could bring to my students. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

have access to the high-quality lab materials necessary for authentic scientific exploration. The purchase of glassware, goggles, and scales has enabled us to conduct more complex and engaging experiments, such as a deep dive into photosynthesis and cellular respiration. Furthermore, the dry erase clipboards have proven invaluable in facilitating collaborative learning. Students use them to record observations, create models, share ideas, and engage in peer discussions during investigations, leading to richer learning experiences and a greater appreciation for the scientific process.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Respectfully,
Kimberly Hyatt
Science Teacher at Radford High**

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:05:58 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Hahn	Testifying for DOE	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE [SENATE] COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jennifer Hahn. I am a beginning teacher at Moanalua Elementart in CENTRAL DISTRICT on the Island of Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel supported and hopeful. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Learn in a stress free environment. These items will help them reduce stress and anxiety by calming the nervous system and releasing neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine. The deep pressure from the weight of the stuffed animal can help improve focus and attention, which can be beneficial for both children and adults with attention difficulties. They can also help people with sensory processing disorders get their bodies in a calm state of mind.

Having prepared lesson plans can help students and teachers accommodate students' different learning styles and abilities, and help teachers incorporate strategies to promote inclusion and cater to students' diverse needs,

With the theme adpated board books I will create adaptive visuals to increase their engagement with books. Many children with language delays or attention issues have difficulty listening to stories. By adding visual supports to these books I can increase engagement by giving them something to hold on to, and predictable and visual way to interact. Depending on the interests of my student (ie. cars, trucks, animals, colors) and seasons, these books will keep my students

engaged throughout the year. For the littles one that have difficulties maintaining attention, having these themed books will be a huge hit.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,
Jennifer Hahn
SPED Preschool Teacher / Moanalua Elementary

LATE

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:23:52 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carissa Crum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carissa Crum. I am a beginning teacher at Pāhoa High and Intermediate in KKP on the Big Island of Hawai'i. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm **deeply** grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and **I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.**

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel so much relief. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Access pencils, paper and cleaning supplies upon my first few weeks of teaching, which heavily impacted the students and myself in the most positive way. I would have never been able to teach my content, STEAM education, with hands on activities for middle schoolers, without the assistance of DonorsChoose. **This resource ensured I would return for a second year of teaching.**

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Mahalo,

Carissa

Middle Level STEAM & Art Teacher

Pahoa High & Intermediate School

LATE

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:04:05 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bobbie Ann K Hanohano	Testifying for Kahuku High & Intermediate School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bobbie Ann Hanohano. I am a beginning teacher at Kahuku High & Intermediate School in the Windward District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel valued. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Immediately access crucial resources such as Financial Literacy Curriculum for my high schoolers, mathematical educational games, notebooks, binders, bookshelves, pens, pencils, visual aids, copy paper, color pencils, markers, dry eraser pens with erasers, white boards, separators (for testing), index cards, punch cards, rewards and incentive items, and scientific calculators which have contributed to the motivating and encouraging my student to actively participate in math and enjoy it.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Bobbie Ann Hanohano

Mathematics & Special Education Teacher

Kahuku High & Intermediate School

LATE

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:29:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashlyn Wyler	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE [SENATE] COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB [1391/ HB 1072]

Chair [Senate- Dela Cruz] and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ashlyn Wyler. I was a beginning teacher at Highlands Intermediate School in the Leeward district on Oahu. I am submitting a testimony in strong support of [SB 1391 / HB 1072] which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel supported and appreciated. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Have a comfortable reading area with a fun smiling rug, seats, books to read and a vacuum cleaner to keep the area clean and organized.

Headphones to connect to their devices when working on IREADY or TeachTown.

Cooking utensils and materials for them to continue with life skill lessons.

Reward items for them to earn that encouraged them to continue working and learning.

Cleaning materials that really helped with making the environment clean and safe for my students.

Lastly, the funding for arts and crafts, school supplies, and classroom decorations made my classroom a warm and inviting space for students to grow, learn, and enjoy being at school.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Without it, my students would have went without, since there is no way I would have been able to afford everything used and needed on my own.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,
Ashlyn Wyler
FSC Special Needs Educator

Highlands Intermediate School

LATE

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 3:00:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anonymous 1st Year TFA Teacher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name has to remain anonymous due to my participation in AmeriCorps and Teach for America. I am a beginning teacher at Kealakehe Intermediate School in Kona on the Big Island. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education DOE. I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel successful as a first year teacher and has allowed my students to have access to much needed supplies. Of these supplies provided by Donors Choose include a map of the World and United States for use in lessons related to ancient world civilizations, binders for each of my students, Ticonderoga Pencils (a must have for all teachers), white board markers and more. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Engage in learning while focusing on key elements of 6th grade curriculum;

Feel that their teachers care enough about students to have access to basic supplies when students can not afford them;

Feel that I as a new teacher have supplies to teach effective lessons; and

Have access to supplies necessary to learn on a daily basis.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Respectfully,
Anonymous - Teach for America Teacher - 6th Grade
Kealakehe Intermediate School**

LATE

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 5:02:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rabayah Akhter	Testifying for HSTA	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

Aloha. My name is Rabayah Akhter. I am a 3rd year Special Education teacher at Kealakehe schools in the HKKK school district in Kona on Hawai'i Island. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel relieved and encouraged. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to have access to crucial items they otherwise would not have exposure to. Special education students are often looked at as a burden, even though they are capable of learning; they need different modalities to learn. That means we need to try and use different tools and see what works. When it works - WOW. You would be amazed and heartened to see a child learning who was dismissed as incapable of learning by previous adults; just because he or she was using specific grade-level materials for the average general education student and it wasn't working for them.

Just as important is the fact that these items help non-Special Education students as well. All students learn in their own way. Its not fair to them that we can't help them just because we aren't offering them the right tools to use to help them learn. We have so many English Language Learner students that our schools are clearly not prepared for. Items I purchased (such as special grooved workbooks for tracing letters, numbers, etc..) ended up being incredibly valuable to students who have such limited exposure to English that they barely feel competent in their classes. I honestly could not do my job well without this kind of funding. I get a new student with specific needs, I need to be able to order them something (like noise cancelling headphones for example) as soon as possible - I can't wait for POs. Often I buy things with my own money because I see a child every minute who needs something. Some things are too expensive for me to buy.

Our classrooms aren't well built for as many students as we have. For example, we're in portable buildings that don't have adequate ventilation, so we have to open the windows but then it's loud outside and the students can't concentrate. I needed to buy a divider so I could help those students with sensory issues have a small area where we could learn better. This is so basic; but that DonorsChoose money through DOE allows me to take care of those needs. My co-teacher bought umbrellas. Can you imagine what it's like when there's a downpour in the middle of the day and we have 7 grades of students trying to walk to lunch on this hilly, outdoor campus? It might seem insignificant, but it changes the entire day and gives kids a better chance to learn when their minimum needs are taken care of.

I can barely think of all the things to write in this little box. The amount of funding this school gets is insufficient for what this community needs; but at the very least, this allows teachers flexibility to adapt to their students. It will be that much harder for the students without this funding.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Rabayah Akhter, Kealakehe Elementary School Special Education Teacher, HSTA member

LATE

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:09:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arianna Shultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Senator Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Arianna Shultz. I am a beginning teacher at Hickam Elementary in Central District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel validated. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Not only am I a new teacher but I am a military spouse. So often I have to start over in classrooms each time we move. It is hard not only creatively but financially as well. Each school I teach at I am servicing a different set of students with various needs. Here in Hawai'i I have been working as a Special Education teacher in a Fully Self Contained (FSC) classroom. Our classroom is composed of the students on campus who need the most support. Their abilities cover a wide range.

We often need breaks throughout the day to regulate ourselves. With the funds from the HIDOE partnership I have been able to update our sensory room with twinkling lights, a speaker for soothing music, a light table and other sensory items to provide students with ways to help regulate their processing needs.

I have also been able to stock my classroom with supplies needed for just basic projects that we complete throughout the year. Having simple things such as cardstock and construction paper help us prepare art projects for units of study. Highlighters make great writing support tools for students who need support in this area.

Flexible seating items such as bouncing bands, cushioned floor seats and wobble cushions help give students opportunities to sit in different locations. These items also allow students to get the wiggles out of themselves but inside in the classroom during instruction without being disruptive.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,
Arianna Shultz
Special Education Teacher/HSTA

LATE

SB-1391-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:15:54 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aloha Silva	Testifying for Kailua High School - Special Education Teacher	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Aloha Silva. I am a new special education teacher at Kailua High School in the Windward District on O’ahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I’m deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I’ve witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel welcomed into my very first classroom. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

When I received the keys to my classroom, the previous teacher's thoughtful choice of wallpaper was a welcome sight, but it was the only thing I inherited. The room was completely bare—no stapler, whiteboard markers, pencil sharpener, hole punch, tape dispenser—absolutely nothing. The stark reality of the empty space was a disheartening reminder of the work ahead, especially considering the unique needs of my students. I work with a particularly vulnerable population, including nonverbal students, those with limited vocabularies, and many who struggle with emotional regulation. Creating a safe and welcoming environment was paramount. Just as I was grappling with how to build this essential space, I received an email that proved to be a lifeline: an offer of \$1,000 to purchase much-needed classroom supplies. This generous support allowed me to transform my room into the nurturing space my students deserved. A key element of this transformation was the creation of a calming corner, a safe haven where students can de-escalate and find comfort. This area is equipped with age-appropriate seating, a variety of fidget toys, magnetic blocks, and sensory items. To further foster a sense of belonging and inspire my students, I also used the funds to purchase diversity posters, art supplies for engaging projects, and motivational stickers. This support was instrumental in building not

just a classroom, but a true home away from home for my students, and I am deeply grateful for the impact it has had on their learning and well-being. I was certain that my students would not want to learn until they feel safe in their environment and I was able to do that with this special funding.

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

**Respectfully,
Aloha Silva
Special Education Teacher
Kailua High School**

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB 1391/ HB 1072



Chair Senate- Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Desiree Joi Mateo. I am a beginning teacher at Waipahu High School in Leeward District on Oahu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1391 / HB 1072 which seeks to continue funding for teacher-requested classroom supplies through the Department of Education (DOE). I'm deeply grateful for the classroom project supplies my students and I received through the HIDOE partnership with DonorsChoose, and I've witnessed the tremendous positive impact of this initiative.

Receiving funding for supplies from the DOE made me feel prepared and supported. It demonstrated the state's commitment to investing in new teachers, acknowledging the unique challenges we face in our first years, and providing the necessary support to help us succeed.

The funding allowed my students to:

Have the supplies needed to take good notes in my class (highlighters, pencils, pens, markers, white out, folders), do practice problems (Expo markers, erasers, magnetic chart paper, whiteboards, organizing bins), take part in art activities (colored pencils, crayons, construction paper), have access to organized supplies (folder paper, blank paper, graph stamp in rainbow carts), take part in engaging review activities (ball and target board and buzzers, index cards), keep track of time in class (big and bright magnetic timer that I use), and to work in a clean classroom environment (scent diffusers, tissues, Swiffer, vacuum for carpet).

I urge you to continue supporting this valuable funding by passing this bill, which will help ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective learning experiences for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Desiree Joi Mateo

Math Teacher at Waipahu High School