



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council

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March 15, 2016

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

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Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair

Committee on Education

Senator Breene Harimoto, Chair

Committee on Housing

State Capitol

Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 2510, HD 1 - Relating to Housing Vouchers

Dear Chairs Kidani and Harimoto and Members of the Committees,

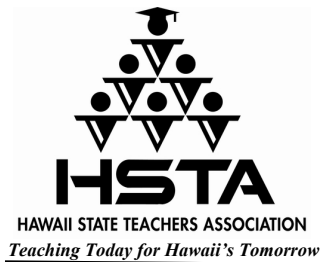
The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **supports** HB 2510, HD 1 that establishes a housing voucher program for full-time public school classroom teachers.

SEAC and others have supported additional incentives for special education teachers to help recruit and retain these critically needed personnel. Accordingly, SEAC offers a suggestion to this Committee that the housing vouchers, if funded, be given out with a priority for teachers filling shortage categories.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this legislation. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me.

Respectfully,

Martha Guinan
Chair



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Corey Rosenlee
President
Justin Hughey
Vice President
Amy Perruso
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON
HOUSING and EDUCATION

RE: HB 2510, HD1 - RELATING TO HOUSING VOUCHERS.

TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2016

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Harimoto, Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports HB 2510, HD1,** relating to housing vouchers.

In the islands, teacher turnover is rife. Approximately 10 percent of Hawaii's teachers switch schools, relocate, or leave the profession each year. Only 50 to 60 percent of current teachers have been at their school for five years or more. Chronic teacher turnover, in turn, forces the department of education to rely on emergency hires and long-term substitute teachers to fill vacancies.

Teacher recruitment and retention is especially difficult for poor and hard-to-staff communities, where as few as 56 percent of teachers are highly qualified. Comparatively, 93 per cent of teachers statewide are highly qualified. Nationwide, 56 per cent of teachers have an advanced degree, while only 36 per cent of Hawaii's teachers have an advanced degree.

Hawaii's high cost of living serves as the primary catalyst for our state's lackluster teacher recruitment and retention results. Year after year, studies, such the annual WalltHub salary comparison, rank Hawai'i fifty-first out of fifty states and the District of Columbia for starting and median teacher salary adjusted for cost of living.



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To recruit and retain effective educators, policymakers must find ways to lessen the financial burden of being a public school teacher. Establishing a housing voucher program is a good first step. In the islands, where new housing rarely becomes available, the percentage of renters who face cost burdens—financial handicaps incurred by people spending over 30 percent of their income on housing—rose from 53 percent in 2007 to nearly 58 percent in 2014, according to an analysis performed by the website ApartmentList.

Many of those cash-strapped renters are state educators, who are chronically underpaid. On a state-by-state basis, Hawaii’s average annual teacher salaries are 19 percent less than California, 20 percent less than Massachusetts, and 25 percent less than New York *before* cost of living adjustments are made. To make ends meet, many teachers are forced to pick up second and third jobs, live in cramped studio apartments, and cut back on necessities like medical care. Thus, a housing voucher program would assist teachers in attaining sustainable and stable residency, while staving off crushing debt burdens. It would also make the teaching profession more attractive by increasing educators’ purchasing power through the subsidization of rent and mortgages in the state with the nation’s highest housing costs.

That said, we **urge you to amend this bill by revising all references to “classroom teachers” to say “teachers,” (delete the word “classroom”).** Not all all teachers provide classroom instruction. Many hardworking teachers serve as counselors, librarians, curriculum coordinators, testing coordinators, special education coordinators, and more. We feel that these educators, too, should be able to benefit from the proposed housing program, since their pay is likewise determined by the HSTA-BOE master agreement and lags the nation.

We must do more to boost our state teachers’ quality of life. Accordingly, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

From: [Catherine Carpenter](#)
To: [HOU Testimony](#)
Subject: Charter School teachers testimony
Date: Monday, March 14, 2016 4:09:43 PM

Dear Friends,

It is an honor to get to share my opinion about this matter with all of you. I am an elementary school teacher at Kamaile Academy Public Charter School in Wai'anae and I love it! I cannot think of a better way to spend my life except with tomorrows future. I know that you are all very involved with planning for the States future so I think we are both heading for the same goals.

I am a single mother of three and own my own home in Wai'anae Kai Homestead. I barely make it monthly with the pay that I receive monthly. This year I actually make less than I did last year, due to the hourly pay cuts. It would be a great blessing if teachers could have assistance to take care of their mortgages and continue working as teachers in our Public Schools, especially in Waianae. I have been a teacher for 18 years and recently began working for the public school systems in Hawaii and struggle to make ends meet. However, I feel a great need to help our students here on the west side of our island .

I hope that you all will think long about the impact this would make to service our teachers and create a more stable environment to our future.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

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*Ms. C. Roselani Carpenter
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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [HOU Testimony](#)
Cc: mjustus@kamaile.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2510 on Mar 15, 2016 14:45PM
Date: Monday, March 14, 2016 7:21:26 PM

HB2510

Submitted on: 3/14/2016

Testimony for HOU/EDU on Mar 15, 2016 14:45PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Monica "Mizu" Justus	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I would like to continue teaching and living in Hawaii long term. I will not be able to if the cost of living continues to be so high and housing continues to be unaffordable.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Testimony on HB 2510, HD1
Related to Housing Vouchers

Chairpersons Kidani and Takumi, my name is Joan Lee Husted, the retired Executive Director of the Hawaii State Teachers Association. I am testifying in support of House Bill 2510, House Draft 1.

There is clearly a shortage of teacher applicants for positions in the Hawaii Department of Education and the turnover is appallingly high. Too many of those now teaching are not properly licensed to teach or teach the subject matter they are responsible for. The situation is further exacerbated by the reduction of college students entering colleges of education. And the situation will worsen in the future.

It is difficult for teachers to reach the top rung of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs if the first rung of basic needs is unmet. Raising teachers' salary is certainly a part of the solution. Finding ways to provide teachers with the ability to find suitable rentals or homes to buy adds to the solution. This voucher system helps with this. And encouraging landlords and mortgage companies to facilitate the process is also a key element. Lenders know that teachers are great risks. The worry about not being able to find affordable housing detracts from the teacher's primary function which is to plan for and teach.

I urge you to pass HB 2510, HD 1. Thank you letting me testify.