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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION

RE: SB 197 - RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS.

MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2017

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **opposes SB 197**, relating to charter schools.

Hawaii's public schools are besieged by overcrowding and declining infrastructure. Our state's school facilities are, on average, over 65-years-old. Yet, at Campbell High School, enrollment stands at 3,049 students, up 15 percent from 2010 and roughly 1,000 more students than in 2005. Campbell was built to serve 1,700 students, meaning that it is operating at 80 percent overcapacity.

Campbell is not the only school facing overcrowding. Numerous schools throughout the state crowd keiki into crumbling buildings, creating classroom experiences that inhibit learning and impede safety. Nonetheless, providing seed money to charter schools is not and should not be the solution to overcrowded classrooms.

While we appreciate this bill's attempt to ease school congestion, we note that it would divert resources from traditional public schools. Charter schools and traditional departmental schools do not follow the same educational paradigm. Charter schools are public schools of choice, in which enrollment is opted into by the families of students. Moreover, despite accountability requirements, charter schools are freed from many of the regulations governing traditional public schools.

Late last year, the State Auditor criticized the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission for inadequate monitoring of charter school finances and compliance with state regulations, saying "the commission staff's inconsistent enforcement of

some but not all compliance requirements does not fulfill the commission's statutory responsibilities." To cite just a few of the problems noted by the State Auditor, Ka Waihona Public Charter School obtained a \$300,000 line of bank credit "without proper authority" and "for purposes not allowable by law," Hawaii Technology Academy is encumbered by \$1.1 million of debt stemming from a contract it signed with the profitmaking online education company K12 Classroom LLC, and declining enrollment at several charter schools has impacted long-term financial sustainability. While these findings should not be interpreted as an indictment of all charter schools, funding charter school start-ups to address overcrowding and infrastructure problems diverts funds from the repair, maintenance, and capital improvement of public schools that already exist, including charters.

Overcrowding must be solved by increasing funding for public schools. Given this proposal's depletion of resources for our already underfunded school system, however, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **oppose** this bill.

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2017 2:19 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: rkailianu57@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB197 on Jan 30, 2017 14:45PM

SB197

Submitted on: 1/30/2017

Testimony for EDU on Jan 30, 2017 14:45PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rachel L. Kailianu	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments: In full support for new start ups.

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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