



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 02/24/2021

**Time:** 02:00 PM

**Location:** 308 Via Videoconference

**Committee:** House Finance

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB 0525, HD2 RELATING TO TEACHER HOUSING.

**Purpose of Bill:** Clarifies that DOE may construct housing for teachers on a public school campus. Requires that housing units constructed or acquired on a school campus after 6/30/2021, be rented at an affordable cost to new teachers or teachers teaching in a rural or hard-to-staff location, with priority given to teachers employed full-time at the school where the housing unit is located. Effective 7/1/2050. (HD2)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 525, HD 2.

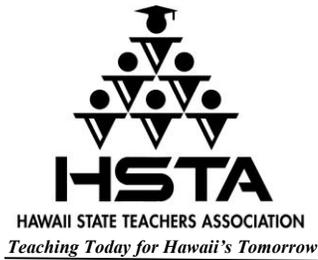
The Department supports more opportunities to increase affordable statewide teacher housing options in order to support ongoing teacher recruitment and retention efforts.

A January 2020 compensation study contracted by the Department revealed that 78% of survey respondents indicated that the lack of housing availability negatively impacted teacher retention in Hawaii. Additionally, a December 2020 comparator and competitor report developed for the Department on teacher recruitment revealed that similarly situated school districts in other states provide greater opportunities for low cost or no cost teacher housing for full-time employees. Furthermore, this report provides feedback from focus groups of current and former Department teachers who echo the need for not only more affordable housing opportunities but also for increasing housing inventory in geographically isolated areas and in higher priced rental locations.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 525, HD 2.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises

to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at [www.hawaiipublicschools.org](http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org).



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Corey Rosenlee  
President  
Osa Tui Jr.  
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Logan Okita  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

RE: HB 525, HD2- RELATING TO TEACHER HOUSING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021

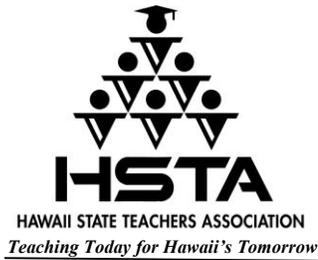
COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports HB 525, HD2**, relating to teacher housing. This bill clarifies that DOE may construct housing for teachers on a public school campus. Requires that housing units constructed or acquired on a school campus after 6/30/2021, be rented at an affordable cost to new teachers or teachers teaching in a rural or hard-to-staff location, with priority given to teachers employed full-time at the school where the housing unit is located. Effective 7/1/2050. (HD2)

Hawai'i continues to suffer from a shortage of licensed teachers. Financial incentives and affordable options for teacher housing are key strategies for the recruitment and retention of teachers, particularly given that Hawai'i's teacher salaries continue to trail the nation when adjusted for cost of living. Housing is a big portion of each teacher's paycheck.

IF we concentrate on retaining our teachers, the Department would not have to focus so much on the recruitment of teachers. To recruit and retain effective educators, policymakers must find ways to lessen the financial burden of being a public school teacher. Building more teacher housing, especially for our new teachers, and establishing affordable teacher rental housing is helpful. 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—is roughly 57 percent, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Many of those cash-strapped renters are state educators, who are chronically underpaid. To make ends meet, many teachers are forced to pick up



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second and third jobs, live in cramped studio apartments, and cut back on necessities like medical and dental care. Thus they cannot devote their full attention to their students and the preparation of lessons and grading that they usually complete after school once their students have left for the day. Instead, they are rushing off to their second or even third jobs when they would much rather concentrate on their teaching duties and their students.

**Thus, building more teacher housing, as long as it is affordable for teachers, will assist them in attaining sustainable and stable residency, while staving off crushing debt burdens. It would also make the teaching profession more attractive by increasing educators' ability to find affordable housing that won't take their whole paycheck.**

To take care of the needs of our hardworking public school educators in Hawai'i, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

February 24, 2021

**The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair**  
House Committee on Finance  
Via Videoconference

**RE: H.B. 525, HD2, Relating to the Department of Education**

**HEARING: Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.**

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

I am Ken Hiraki, Director of Government Affairs, testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® (“HAR”), the voice of real estate in Hawai'i, and its over 10,000 members. HAR **supports** House Bill 525, HD2, which clarifies that the Department of Education (“DOE”) may construct housing for teachers on a public school campus. Requires that housing units constructed or acquired on a school campus after 6/30/2021, be rented at an affordable cost to new teachers or teachers teaching in a rural or hard-to-staff location, with priority given to teachers employed full-time at the school where the housing unit is located.

According to the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism’s 2019 report on Housing Demand in Hawai'i, the State needs up to 46,000 housing units to meet demand in Hawai'i by 2030. Ultimately, we have a housing supply problem, and we need creative solutions to build more housing at all price points, including for teachers. Land costs is a big part of the development costs, so by utilizing public school lands to build teacher housing would help address this large cost.

Furthermore, the National Association of REALTORS® Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers found that for first-time homebuyers, saving for the down payment was the most difficult task in the buying process. To put this in perspective, the following is the median sales price in January 2021, for a single-family home, based on a 20% conventional loan:

<b>County:</b>	<b>Median Sales Price:</b>	<b>20% Downpayment:</b>
Hawai'i Island	\$450,000	<b>\$90,000</b>
Kaua'i	\$1,030,500	<b>\$206,100</b>
Maui	\$980,000	<b>\$196,000</b>
O'ahu	\$883,000	<b>\$176,600</b>

Additionally, according to the Profile Report, student loans and high rent costs were debts that delayed savings for a down payment. By renting at an affordable rate for teachers, this would help our teachers save for a down payment.

Furthermore, at a time when our economy is hurting, this is a creative and budget-neutral approach to tackle the solution of housing and helping our teachers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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**HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**  
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-First Legislature, State of Hawaii  
House of Representatives  
Committee on Finance

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 24, 2020

H.B. 525, H.D. 2 — Relating To Teacher Housing

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO wishes to provide comments on H.B. 525, H.D. 2, which proposes to establish a teachers' housing program administered by the Hawaii Department of Education, establish a teachers' housing revolving fund, and allow the department to construct a teacher housing facility on any campus of a public school.

The HGEA represents thousands of employees who work for the DOE and make less than a starting Hawaii teacher's salary. They, too, should benefit from a housing program being administered by the department for which they work. They and their immediate families also deserve to be considered for affordable rental housing. If rental housing will be made available for new teachers, then the legislature should also consider providing "workforce housing" for other government employees regardless of jurisdiction.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on H.B. 525, H.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
Executive Director

**HB-525-HD-2**

Submitted on: 2/22/2021 1:34:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support

It is important that we support ways to help support our educators.