

SB2590

Date: 02/08/2010

Committee: Senate Education and
Housing

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn Matayoshi, Interim Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 2590 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the department of education to consider making public school facilities available to charter schools, when public schools are closed.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (DOE) supports this bill, which requires the DOE to give consideration to public charter schools wishing to relocate into public school facilities made vacant because of school closures.

We recommend that the bill be amended to provide that (a) it apply to DOE schools where the state is the landowner and (b) the Department of Land & Natural Resources (DLNR) be directed to enter into an agreement with the selected charter school for the use of the school facility.

If the school to be closed is on land owned by the county, the county may have a different position on the disposition of the land. If the school to be closed is on land owned by the state, the DOE will turn the land over to DLNR, and the agreement for the use of the facility by a charter school will be between DLNR and the charter school.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony.



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February 8, 2010

Honorable Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senate Committee on Education and Housing

**Re: SB2590, Relating to Education - Support
SB2589, Relating to Charter Schools - Support**

EDH Committee – February 8, 2010, Conference Room 225, 1:45 PM

Aloha Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Kidani and Committee members:

On behalf of the Hawaii Technology Academy (HTA), a public charter school which serves students in Oahu, Kauai, Hawaii Island and parts of Maui, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of these bills.

We support both SB2590, which requires the Department of Education (DOE) to consider making public school facilities available to charter schools when such facilities are closed, and SB2589, which requires the DOE to make such facilities available and establishes a process for the DOE and Charter School Review Panel to review, approve or deny applications for such facilities.

We view SB2590 as providing the authorizing language for public charter schools to have first access to public school facility closures, and SB2589 as the implementing language to carry out this program, which provides a benefit the public charter school system and to the DOE and to the state, which has to maintain public facilities.

HTA is one of Hawaii's 31 public charter schools that are part of the state public school system. Like Hawaii DOE schools, charters comply with federal and state education standards. We support efforts like this to improve Hawaii's public education system.

Most of all, we endorse changes that create equitable funding and a supportive environment for all DOE and public charter schools to better position Hawaii in competition for U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top (RTT) initiative. States with policies in place supporting equitable funding for all public school students are at greater competitive advantage to qualify for RTT and other federal grant programs.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge members to support the passage of these bills.

Sincerely,

Jeff Piontek
Hawaii Technology Academy Head of School



ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS

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TESTIMONY OF LEIMOMI KHAN, PRESIDENT
ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS
IN SUPPORT OF

SB 2590 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING

February 8, 2010, 1:45 p.m., Conference Room 225

Aloha, Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Committee:

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs (AHCC) firmly supports SB 2590, which would require the Department of Education to incorporate into its school-closing process an opportunity for public charter schools to relocate into the facilities formerly occupied by any non-charter public school that is being closed. This bill and SB 2589 are wonderful initiatives that put to good use the facilities of the closing public schools, promotes valued education, and assists with the challenges facing charter schools in this time of an economic downturn.

We are particularly supportive of the Na Lei Na‘auao, a consortium of Hawaiian-focused public charter schools located on four islands and serving over 1000 Hawaiian students. They are providing quality education by creative culturally-driven models of education and by controlling their educational processes at the community level.

Allowing use of closing public schools for Charter Schools would help to provide enhanced educational facilities. A good move by the legislature, we firmly support passage of SB 2590.

About the AHCC

The Association is a growing national confederation of fifty-eight Hawaiian Civic Clubs, located throughout the State of Hawai‘i and in the States of Alaska, California, Colorado, Illinois, Nevada, Utah, Virginia, Washington State, Tennessee, and Texas. It initiates and works to support actions that enhance the civic, economic, educational, health and social welfare of our communities, and in particular, the culture and welfare of the Native Hawaiian community.