



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

Date: 04/11/2025

Time: 03:00 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: GM 0780 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the School Facilities Authority, gubernatorial nominee, MICHAEL UNEBASAMI, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Purpose of Bill:

Department's Position:

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) supports the nomination of Mr. Michael Unebasami to the School Facilities Authority (SFA) Board.

Mr. Unebasami brings over five decades of public service experience, including his current role as Associate Vice President for Administrative Affairs for the UH Community College System. His leadership in facilities management, finance, legislative affairs, and operations directly aligns with the responsibilities of the SFA.

In addition to his professional achievements, Mr. Unebasami's long-standing service in the Hawai'i National Guard and his commitment to community organizations further reflect his dedication to the well-being of our state.

The Department relies on a strong, collaborative relationship with the SFA to ensure our facilities meet the needs of 21st-century learners. Mr. Unebasami's proven record of excellence, both locally and nationally, will be an invaluable asset in advancing these shared goals.

We respectfully urge the Senate to confirm his nomination. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.

Kalbert Young
P.O. Box 61362
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96839

April 10, 2025

The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
And Members
Senate Committee on Education
415 South Beretania Street, Conference Room 229
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**RE: G.M. 780 - FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION
TO THE SCHOOL FACILITIES AUTHORITY,
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, MICHAEL UNEBASAMI**

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the confirmation of Mr. Michael Unebasami to the board of the School Facilities Authority.

I have known Mr. Unebasami for more than 10 years in his work for the University of Hawai'i and its community college system. In that capacity Mr. Unebasami was responsible for leading a team to execute capital planning, budgeting, and construction projects – amongst other things. The mission and objectives of the School Facility Authority are closely similar to the experience and background of roles Mr. Unebasami led for the University of Hawai'i. I believe that his expertise will be of tremendous value and benefit to the School Facilities Authority, its administrators, and fellow board members.

I urge the members of the Senate Committee on Education to support his selection by voting favorably on his nomination and advancing G.M. 780 for full Senate confirmation.

Sincerely,


KALBERT K. YOUNG

Testimony Submitted to the
Senate Committee on Education
Friday, April 11, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.

**GM 780 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the School Facilities Authority,
Gubernatorial Nominee, MICHAEL UNEBASAMI, for a term to expire 06-30-2029**

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for Mr. Unebasami's nomination to the board of the Hawai'i School Authority.

Having had the privilege of working directly under Mr. Unebasami for over 15 years at the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges (UHCC) system and having collaborated with him for more than a decade at the legislature, I can attest to his exceptional leadership, unwavering dedication, and deep commitment to the University and the State of Hawai'i. His contributions to the UHCC system have been transformative, and his leadership has left a lasting and positive impact on the institution, its employees, and the students we serve.

In his role as Associate Vice President of Administrative Affairs, Mr. Unebasami consistently displayed strategic foresight, sound judgment, and the ability to manage complex challenges while maintaining a clear focus on the mission of the UHCC system. His leadership helped to shape and sustain the financial and operational success of the UHCC, ensuring its stability and growth during times of change and uncertainty.

Mr. Unebasami's legacy is marked not only by his leadership and strategic vision but also by his ability to build strong and productive partnerships both within the University and externally with stakeholders, including the legislature. His commitment to collaboration and transparency fostered an environment of mutual respect and trust, both of which were instrumental in advancing the goals of the UHCC system.

The Hawai'i School Facilities Authority (SFA) plays a vital role in the development and construction of preschools, central Maui schools, and workforce housing, and Mr. Unebasami's extensive experience makes him an ideal candidate to contribute to SFA's mission as a board member. His background in managing large-scale infrastructure projects, navigating complex budgets, and leading strategic initiatives will be invaluable in ensuring that SFA's projects are planned, developed, and executed successfully.

Mr. Unebasami's expertise in contract negotiations and public-private partnerships would be key to SFA's ability to collaborate with qualified entities for the construction and renovation of educational and housing facilities. His ability to build strong, productive relationships with stakeholders, including government agencies, private developers, and community organizations, will be an asset as SFA works to secure funding, manage resources, and meet project goals.

Testimony Submitted to the
Senate Committee on Education
Friday, April 11, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.

Additionally, his experience in financial management and securing funding will support SFA's efforts in acquiring property, financing projects, and obtaining grants from both public and private sources. His understanding of complex agreements and his leadership in managing large, multi-faceted initiatives will be instrumental in ensuring the smooth execution of SFA's goals.

Mr. Unebasami's leadership in staffing and talent management will also be invaluable, helping SFA recruit and retain top professionals—such as architects, engineers, and project managers—who are critical to the successful development and construction of SFA's projects.

In sum, I am confident that Mr. Michael T. Unebasami would be a tremendous asset to the Hawai'i School Facilities Authority board. His experience, leadership, and strategic vision make him uniquely qualified to support and advance SFA's mission in the development of schools and workforce housing across Hawai'i. I wholeheartedly recommend him for this appointment as a Member of SFA, knowing he will make a lasting impact on the success of the Authority's initiatives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Aaron Nyuha".

Aaron Nyuha
Director,
Budget, Planning and Finance Office
University of Hawai'i Community Colleges

GM-780

Submitted on: 4/8/2025 6:15:57 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lon Paresa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

I strongly support Mike Unebasami for this position. Lucky to have him serve.

mahalo,

Lon Paresa

Retired Military and Legislative Officer



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Office of the Vice-Chancellor of Administrative Affairs

April 6, 2025

Honorable Michelle N. Kidani
Chair, Senate Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 214
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee,

I am honored to submit this testimony in strong support of appointing emeritus Associate Vice President for the Community Colleges, Mr. Mike Unebasami, to the Hawai'i School Facilities Authority (HISFA).

Mr. Unebasami is an ideal candidate for HISFA. With 56 years of dedicated service to higher education, he brings a wealth of experience, vision, and leadership. I have had the privilege of working closely with him for the past 25 years, during which I witnessed firsthand his exceptional contributions and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Under Mr. Unebasami's leadership, the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges gained national recognition for energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives. At both UH Maui College and Leeward Community College, we are now on the cusp of achieving "Net Zero" status—a goal that would not have been attainable without his steadfast vision, tireless effort, and passion for sustainable and forward-thinking facilities development.

You may already be aware of some of his distinguished achievements, such as receiving the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) Distinguished Business Officer Award in 2019, the State of Hawai'i Governor's Award for State Manager of the Year in 2009, and his service as President of the Western Association of College and University Business Officers in 2008.

However, what may not be as publicly known are the remarkable personal qualities that truly define Mr. Unebasami. His leadership is grounded in integrity, humility, and a deep commitment to mentorship. I owe much of my own professional journey at UH Maui College to his guidance—he was instrumental in my hiring and mentored me throughout my tenure as Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services. His support helped me navigate complex areas including finance, human resources, facilities, campus security, and auxiliary services.

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Office of the Vice-Chancellor of Administrative Affairs

Beyond his technical expertise, Mr. Unebasami's legacy is shaped by the values he embodies—integrity, honesty, and unwavering ethical standards. These values not only inspire those around him but also ensure that every initiative he touches is carried out with the highest level of excellence.

I wholeheartedly and enthusiastically support Mr. Unebasami's appointment to HISFA. His leadership and experience will bring invaluable insight to the Authority, and his contributions will have a lasting impact on Hawai'i's students and educational facilities at this critical time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David S. Tamanaha".

David S. Tamanaha
Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services

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GM-780

Submitted on: 4/8/2025 7:43:26 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
alan oshima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of the confirmation of Michael Unebasami as a member of the School Facilities Authority board. He has decades of experience as a valued administrator in the University of Hawai'i system, leading many innovative facilities projects for the Community Colleges. His knowledge and appreciation of State of Hawai'i government and higher education will provide the SFA board with perspectives and expertise. Mike and I have known each other for many years as former student government leaders at Farrington High School. Please confirm him as a member of the SFA board. Thank you. Alan Oshima

GM-780

Submitted on: 4/8/2025 10:19:04 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the committee:

I submit my testimony **in strong support** of the confirmation of Michael Unebasami to the School Facilities Authority. I have worked closely with Mr. Unebasami for over 8 years in my role as chancellor (or previously, vice chancellor) of Honolulu Community College while Mr. Unebasami was Associate Vice President of Administration at the UH Community Colleges before his retirement in December 2024.

During his 50+ years of service at UH, he has worked in or overseen many areas in the administrative services arena, which includes facilities management, capital improvements, budget/finance, human resources, and marketing. His deep knowledge and experience in these areas make him a perfect candidate for the School Facilities Authority.

Moreover, Mr. Unebasami is a conscientious, honest, industrious, smart and kind individual. He approaches every issue with calm precision and desire to solve problems efficiently and effectively. He understands State procedures as well as potential restrictions and policies very well, and is able to get things done despite some bureaucracies that others may not understand.

Mr. Unebasami would be an extremely effective member of the SFA. I have no hesitations in giving him my highest recommendation.

Sincerely,

Karen C. Lee

GM-780

Submitted on: 4/9/2025 8:07:49 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randall Nishimura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair Kidani and members of the Senate Education Committee

I am in favor GM 780 and support the nomination of Michael Umebasami to the School Facilities Authority. Mr. Umebasami is uniquely qualified to serve on this authority with his long background in facilities administration at the University of Hawaii.

Mahalo for your consideration

Randall Nishimura

GM-780

Submitted on: 4/10/2025 8:11:33 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Derek Inafuku	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the esteemed members of the Senate Committee on Education,

I am writing to express my strong support for the consideration and confirmation of Michael Unebasami, Gubernatorial Nominee, to the School Facilities Authority, for a term to expire on June 30, 2029.

Mr. Unebasami's qualifications and demonstrated commitment to public service make him an exceptional candidate for this vital role. In his 56 years of service at the University of Hawaii, some of Mike's outstanding contributions and transformations are in sustainability and workforce development, in addition to managing both the finances and administration of the UH Community Colleges.

I first met Mike in 1988, and as I think of how Mike was back then, not much has changed. He was very respected leader who was known to have a great working relationship with all his managers and colleagues that he encountered. He has been a mentor to many and has established not just healthy business relationships, but real friendships. Because of his honesty and sincerity, Mike is a rare breed, in that he has the highest respect by the majority of administrators, faculty and staff within the University of Hawaii, as well as Hawaii's most powerful political leaders. All the Community College campuses has benefited from Mike's tireless work attitude in getting the most financial support every year.

Although he is retired, Mike's pride for the University of Hawaii and the State of Hawaii will never change. Because of this, Mike will be perfect for the School Facilities Authority. I urge the members of the Senate Committee on Education to support his selection.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity.

Denise Yoshimori-Yamamoto
95-1938 Lehiwa Drive
Mililani, Hawaii 96789

April 10, 2025

The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair and Members
Senate Committee on Education
415 South Beretania Street, Conference Room 229
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: GM 780 – For Consideration and Confirmation to the School Facilities Authority,
Gubernatorial Nominee, Michael Unebasami

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the confirmation of Michael Unebasami to the board of the School Facilities Authority (SFA).

I have had the privilege of working with Mr. Unebasami for the last 14 years both as a Community College System architect and then his direct report as Director of Design and Construction. Under his leadership, the Community College System has successfully executed numerous capital improvements throughout the entire state. He has successfully led the community colleges through many challenges throughout his tenure. This experience is directly in line with the mission of SFA. His expertise will be a great asset to the SFA board.

I strongly encourage the Senate Committee on Education to support his selection.

Thank you,

Denise Yoshimori-Yamamoto, DARCH, NCARB, LEED AP

Testimony Presented Before
Senate Committee on Education
April 11, 2025, 3:00 PM; Conference Room 229
By
Carlos Peñaloza

GM 780 Michael Unebasami, School Facilities Authority

Chair Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair Donna Mercado-Kim, and Members of the Committee

I am Carlos Peñaloza, chancellor at the University of Hawai'i [UH] Leeward Community College [CC]. My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai'i [UH].

Unebasami and I began working closely together when I assumed the role of chancellor in July 2019. As a newcomer to Hawai'i, I greatly benefited from his guidance and support. He took me under his wing and played an essential role in helping me navigate all facets of Hawai'i's unique landscape — including UH System, business and community organizations, key individuals, and government entities.

His insight and orientation extended across Executive and Legislative government branches, making my transition into the leadership role at Leeward CC both effective and meaningful. Through Unebasami's guidance, I was able to quickly adapt to Hawai'i's work environment and culture. His 56 years of experience in business operations and administrative affairs proved invaluable to me.

More importantly, Unebasami's leadership and guidance during the unprecedented shutdown of Hawai'i in March 2020—prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which included immediate suspension of face-to-face classes across UH—were instrumental in helping UHCC navigate daily obstacles and challenges we faced. His deep experience and longstanding connections with UH leadership enabled UHCC to respond quickly and effectively to rapidly evolving issues affecting our facilities, students, employees, and instruction. His unwavering support ensured we could continue fulfilling our mission to serve and educate our students and community during an extraordinarily difficult time.

Unebasami's experience and knowledge have been instrumental in working with the Legislature to communicate and advocate for UHCC's needs—particularly in securing operating and Capital Improvement Project (CIP) funding. He has a deep understanding of roles and responsibilities of board members, and extensive background in facilities, budgeting and fiscal matters, and workforce development have been invaluable in aligning UHCC priorities with legislative expectations and state goals.

In summary, Unebasami's extensive experience, deep knowledge, and proven expertise make him a valuable asset to the State of Hawai'i and fully qualify him to serve as a member of the Hawai'i School Facilities Authority Board.



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April 7, 2025

The Hon. Michelle N. Kidani
Chair, Senate Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 214
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Gov. Msg. No. 780; Testimony in Support of the Appointment of Michael T. Unebasami to the Hawai'i School Facilities Authority

Dear Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

I support the appointment of Michael T. Unebasami to the Hawai'i School Facilities Authority (HISFA).

There are few, if any, people in the State of Hawai'i who have as much experience and expertise in the management of educational facilities and operations as Michael T. Unebasami. Recently retired, he has a long and distinguished career record in higher education administration, with over 56 years of dedicated service to the University of Hawai'i. As Associate Vice President for Administrative Affairs for UH Community Colleges, Mr. Unebasami was an outstanding leader in overseeing budget and financial affairs, human resources, facilities planning, and legal and legislative affairs.

Mr. Unebasami is a professional whose talents were appreciated and recognized nationally and statewide. In 2007-2008, he served as President of the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), and in 2019 he received the organization's Distinguished Business Officer Award. In 2009, he received the State of Hawai'i Governor's Award for State Manager of the Year.

I fully support Mr. Unebasami's appointment. He will make an excellent member of HISFA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lui K. Hokoana'.

Lui K. Hokoana, EdD

Della Teraoka
250 Kawaihae Street
Honolulu, HI 96825

April 10, 2025

The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair, and Members
Senate Committee on Education
415 South Beretania Street, Conference Room 229
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**RE: G.M. 780 - FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE SCHOOL FACILITIES
AUTHORITY, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, MICHAEL UNEBASAMI**

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the confirmation of Mr. Michael Unebasami to the board of the School Facilities Authority.

I have known Mr. Unebasami for over 25 years due to his position with the University of Hawai'i Community College System Office. As the associate vice president for administrative affairs, Mr. Unebasami led a team to responsible for all business operations and administrative affairs, including budget and financial management; human resources; planning and facilities management; emergency operations and campus security; marketing and communications; auxiliary enterprises; EEO/AA; Title IX compliance; and legal and legislative affairs.

One of his key roles was to execute capital planning, budgeting, and construction projects. The mission and objectives of the School Facility Authority are closely similar to the experience and background of Mr. Unebasami and the work he led for the University of Hawai'i. I believe that his expertise will be of tremendous value and benefit to the School Facilities Authority, its administrators, and fellow board members.

I urge the members of the Senate Committee on Education to support his selection by voting favorably on his nomination and advancing G.M. 780 for full Senate confirmation.

Sincerely,



Della Teraoka



ASHFORD + WRISTON
A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW PARTNERSHIP LLP

BENJAMIN A. KUDO
Telephone: (808) 539-0400
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bkudo@awlaw.com

April 10, 2025

To: The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Education

From: Benjamin A. Kudo
Ashford & Wriston
999 Bishop Street, Suite 1400
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: **GM 780 Consideration and confirmation to the School Facilities Authority
Gubernatorial Nominee, MICHAEL UNEBASAMI, for a term to expire
06-30-2029 – IN SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and Members of the Committee:

My name is Benjamin A. Kudo and I am an attorney with Ashford & Wriston. I am writing in **SUPPORT** of GM 780 and the appointment of Mr. Michael Unebasami to the School Facilities Authority.

I have known Mr. Unebasami for fifteen (15) years. He was formerly with the University of Hawaii and did a splendid job there for the community colleges. He also excelled in civic and political matters that the University faced and added a positive dimension to his perspective and competence.

In my opinion, Mr. Unebasami is a person of high integrity, compassion and intelligence and has the capability to meet the challenges of this position. Mr. Unebasami will faithfully carry out his responsibilities as a member of the School Facilities Authority and will be a good addition to it.

Based on the foregoing, I strongly recommend with no reservation your favorable consideration of Mr. Michael Unebasami for the aforementioned position. He is a person who will prove to be worthy of your support and the public trust.

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The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Chair
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Education
April 10, 2025
Page 2 of 2

Thank you for your consideration and I respectfully urge your Committee's support to confirm his nomination.

Very truly yours,

ASHFORD & WRISTON



Benjamin A. Kudo

BAK:st

GM-780

Submitted on: 4/10/2025 4:35:09 PM

Testimony for EDU on 4/11/2025 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support Michael Unebasami for the School Facilities Authority (SFA) Board. Mike brings a wealth of experience to the SFA Board from his long career in state government.

I have known Mike for many years. Mike is well-respected and had an outstanding reputation. I was honored to recently work with Mike at the University of Hawai'i (UH) Community Colleges System Office from 2017-2022. Mike was the long time Associate Vice President for Administration, and I served as Mike's counterpart, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (interim), from 2020 - 2022. Mike and I worked closely to address challenges facing community colleges during the pandemic. First we focused on providing continuity of education to students and the community. Second, we activated the community colleges and its partners for workforce development to address pandemic-impacted unemployment through training and with support of philanthropic, competitive federal grants, and contracts. Third, we reviewed operations to restructure services to better support student learning and workforce development. I always appreciated the depth of Mike's experience to understand and explain the systems, his relationships across the University and state government, and his willingness to find a solution.

Mike is committed to serving Hawaii. Throughout his career, Mike has served through 56 years of service at the UH, 38 years with the Hawai'i Air National Guard and 47 years with the UH Federal Credit Union.

Mike's brings relevant experience to the SFA Board from his long tenure at UH. In particular, Mike was responsible for planning and facilities management for UH Community Colleges' eight campuses (including Palamanui) and four education centers. Mike worked collaboratively with chancellors and legislators across the islands to make decisions about resources and priorities. Mike understands the importance of communication, transparency, partnership, and resource management in executing on facilities.

I am confident that Mike will bring a seasoned and pragmatic perspective to the SFA Board which will benefit SFA and schools. I appreciate his willingness to serve, especially during his long awaited retirement.