



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

Date: 02/13/2025

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 0133, HD1 RELATING TO SURFING.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education to support the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) recognizes the intent of HB 133 HD1, and respectfully offers comments and concerns.

Since 2005, the Department has developed regulations to implement surfing as a high school sport. In 2016, the Hawaii State Board of Education approved the Board Policy 101-11, Surfing, which established surfing as a high school sport.

While the Department appreciates appropriations to support surfing in high school athletic programs, this would not address the more significant risk factors that make surfing difficult for many high schools to sanction. These risks include concerns about accessible and safe surfing areas to conduct practices and the inability to control the practice environment. On Oahu, surfing has not been proposed by any Department high school principal, and providing funding, while appreciated, would not alleviate these concerns. Any new competitive athletic sport offered in the Department is determined by the respective league associations where it is proposed and approved to ensure conditions are right for students and the school.

The Department reached out to the surfing community and discovered that organizing a single surfing competition would cost approximately \$4,350. This amount covers essential expenses such as judges, beach marshals, tabulators, production staff, lifeguards, bonded security officers, contest directors, administrative services, meals, and supplies. This cost does not include funding for coaches' salaries, bus transportation, and equipment. Comparatively, this makes surfing the most expensive sport to operate; for example, the costliest football game ran around \$1,800.

The Department respectfully suggests that perhaps funding could be redirected towards school co-curricular surf clubs where there might be student interest, and where the school has determined that safety concerns

have been adequately addressed. The Department also requests that any appropriations would not negatively impact the Department's Governor's Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

COUNTY COUNCIL

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KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
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Felicia Cowden
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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawaii 96766

February 11, 2025

TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
HB 133, HD 1, RELATING TO SURFING
AND
HB 89, HD 1, RELATING TO TEACHER HOUSING
House Committee on Education
House Committee on Economic Development & Technology
Thursday, February 13, 2025
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309
Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Woodson, Chair Ilagan, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 133, HD 1, Relating to Surfing and HB 89, HD 1, Relating to Teacher Housing. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I wholeheartedly support the intent of HB 133, HD 1 and HB 89, HD 1, which would greatly affect the Kaua'i community.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 133, HD 1 and HB 89, HD 1. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

ADDISON BULOSAN
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:dmc

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR

REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR



Testimony of Derek S.K. Kawakami

Mayor, County of Kaua'i

Before the

House Committee on Education

February 13, 2025; 2:00 PM

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

In consideration of

House Bill 133 HD1 Relating to Surfing

Honorable Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee:

The County of Kaua'i is in **support** of HB 133 HD1 Relating to Surfing which appropriates funds to the Department of Education to support the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport.

The sport of surfing embodies the social and cultural fabric of Hawai'i. With its long history in our islands and deemed by many as the most popular sport in Hawai'i, the sport of surfing was sanctioned by the Department of Education and approved by the Board of Education in 2016.

Since then, only one of five state interscholastic athletic leagues has embraced the sport, leaving our surfing students with limited opportunities to compete at the high school level. This bill not only proposes to add funding to support surfing as a competitive high school sport but also lends the opportunity for discussion and encouragement to the other interscholastic athletic leagues to consider adopting the sport.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this measure, HB 133 HD1 Relating to Surfing.

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 10:03:43 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joslyn Sato	Leilehua High School - Mules Surf Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Thank you EDN Committee for scheduling a hearing and allowing testimony. As with my previous testimony I stand to support HB133 to provide students an opportunity to represent their high school and peers to be part of Hawaii's sport of Surfing. Surfing offers many benefits in addition to those achieved being a student-athlete. Surfing aligns with the DOE's Nā Hopena A'ō (HĀ) by allowing students to be connected to the ocean and an active lifestyle rich in culture and history. As a parent, this has been an excellent experience for my daughter to connect her passion and represent her school doing her "sport", while gaining benefits that impact her well-being, build connections, gain ocean safety and ocean stewardship, and exposure to career opportunities; all that will last well beyond high school.

High school surfing has gone through the legislature on several occasions, and now is the time to take a step forward and find ways to collaborate and work towards making high school surfing a recognized and supported 'Oahu high school sport.

The Current Season

15 'Oahu schools (6 private schools and 9 public schools) have participated in the high school surf contests this school year. Several others have identified they were interested but due to a lack of resources to include funding and program offerings to fulfill the coach and student ocean lifeguard requirements, schools struggle to fulfill requirements in time to participate.

This year, 162 students (about 102 Boys and 60 Girls) have participated in a surf contest so far. With the growth of participating schools, the coaches have been working together to plan and coordinate the season. Teams follow the [Surfing in Hawaii Schools: A White Paper](#). The Hawaii Surfing Association hosts all contests, and works with a coach working group to determine dates, locations, rosters, etc.

The current season is planned for all schools to compete in at least 5 contests, which requires about 7 Contest Days. This limitation is based on Ocean/Park permit limitations on time as well as number of students in a heat (in the water competing at a time).

- A Contest day consists of 2 Contests (a morning contest and an afternoon contest). 6 Schools participate in a Contest (12 schools total on a Contest Day).

- There are 5 Divisions, with 3 heats in each (1 student per school in each heat). Divisions include Boys Shortboard, Girls Shortboard, Coed Bodyboard, Boys Longboard, and Girls Longboard.
- Teams do not need a full roster to participate.

General expenses for each team include Contest Fees from the Hawaii Surfing Association, AAU membership for each student and coach, Coach ocean lifeguard training classes, Student ocean lifeguard training classes, and any other general equipment needed.

By moving this bill forward, we can work on the key areas that continue to come up during legislative hearings:

- Interest to become an OIA Sport: Starting a surf team without resources is challenging, many start off small and getting all the requirements completed without any resources prevents schools from starting a team.

When considering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in any sport, not all sports will have the same level of interest at every school and/or might be smaller teams, but if a sport (especially one tied so closely to Hawai'i's culture, history, economy, and lifestyle) cannot fulfill the requirements to meet OIA consideration, then possibly a new approach may need to be considered to provide a process and way to recognize and support (resources & funding).

- Safety & Liability: Surfing occurs in the ocean, which is not a controlled environment like a park or school field or court; however, surfing is not the first ocean sport. There are other sports that take place in the ocean and we can leverage those safety protocols. In addition, Maui has offered surfing for about 10-years. Teams follow guidance established in the White Paper with surveying ocean conditions, having lifeguards, having students/coaches trained, AAU insurance, and ensuring proper equipment.

Recognizing High School Surfing as an Interscholastic Sport is an opportunity to support and invest in our Hawai'i - the culture, the history, the future, the lifestyle. Your support would provide resources to strengthen the program. Your investment is not only for a sport with contests, but a program that builds ocean stewards connected to the 'aina, promote and support active lifestyle and community/cultural connections, expose students to future careers related to the ocean and surf industry which directly supports Hawai'i, and you invest in ocean safety by giving coaches and students skills that they use when they are in the ocean to keep not only themselves safe but also safety of others.

Thank you for your time and consideration to support HB133.

Joslyn Sato

Parent and Volunteer of the Leilehua High School Mules Surf Team

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 10:45:06 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kylie Sato	Leilehua High School, Mules Surf Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I am the captain of Leilehua High School's Surf Team. I wanted to also join on zoom but I am unable to miss my math class. I started our surf team with my friend last year. When people asked me what sport I was going to do in high school or if I do a sport, my response was always... "I surf!" Surfing is my sport! Even though I don't do it competitively outside of school it's my sport because that's what I love and that's all I do on the weekends and after school.

While Surfing is a sanctioned sport there are no committed resources. Surfing aligns with the DOE's Vision and Values and is connected to our history, culture, 'aina, and career opportunities here in Hawai'i. Being in our second year, I have seen so much benefits but also challenges.

Surfing for my high school has given me an opportunity to excel in surfing, participate in contests and meet other students, and fuel my passion for the ocean while also staying active and being part of something in my school with other students that surf & bodyboard.

I also like that we are required to take Jr Lifeguard because it keeps us safe but also allows us to be aware of the safety of others anytime we are around the ocean. We can warn others and a few team mates also saved others because of our training.

The challenge I've seen is that because it's not an official sport, teams struggle to fundraise and find coaches. Also we don't get a lot of choices for surf spots because of permitting. Having more support by the DOE would help to make our season better.

Surfing is more than just a high school sport and more than just a contest. It connects me to the Hawaiian culture, history, and the ocean, and I appreciate it more but also become more aware of safety and caring for the ocean and beach. It's also good for my wellbeing and provides awareness to the industry and career opportunities.

My school is celebrating its 100th year and looking through history, in 1999 students like me had the same hope for their surf club to become part of the OIA. Over 25-years later students are still dreaming of the same thing!

Last year I sent out a petition and received over 300 supporters: <https://www.change.org/p/support-high-school-surfing-as-an-official-athletic-sport>

Everyone I talk to and encounter supports high school surfing and they often are confused why it's not a sport, especially here in Hawai'i. Check out this video to hear a little from my team and coach about high school surfing featured by K2 (scroll down the page to find the video): <https://www.k2-nho.com/k2-foundation>. You can also visit our Instagram to see more of our team https://www.instagram.com/mules_surfteam/

By passing HB133 it is a step forward in making high school surfing (shortboard, bodyboard, longboard) a recognized sport and investing in us and giving us an opportunity to connect our passion to our school, expose us to career opportunities, and create ocean stewards that embrace culture and history now and for a lifetime. Our sport might be small and there might not be large teams, but surfing is our sport! Your support and resources matter and will make a difference!

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Kylie Sato (10) and the Mules Surf Team

Team Captain, Leilehua High School

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 1:17:20 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Schiffner	Kaiser High School Surf Club/Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Hawai'i State Legislators,

I am writing in support of HB133. I am a Hawaii State educator of over 20 years and a parent of two Hawaii DOE students. Both of my daughters are competitive surfers and have participated in surf contests all over Oahu and Nationally. Surfing is synonymous with Hawaii and Hawaii surfers have dominated the professional world of surfing for many years. There are many professional opportunities in surfing in and out of the water. Surfing is a billion dollar industry. In 2022 the global surfing industry was valued at \$4 billion and is expected to continue to grow. Investing in the next generation of surfers is a smart move for Hawaii. One of the most revered historical figures from contemporary Hawaii is Duke Kahanamoku, the father of surfing. Most recently Hawai'i's Carissa Moore won the Olympic gold medal in surfing. Oahu is also the home to the most revered surfing spots in the world. To not have surfing as an interscholastic sport under the DOE is an added wound to the history of Hawaii and a disservice to students. Scholastic surfing is already in place in many coastal states across the US. People across our state and the US mainland are completely shocked when they learn Hawaii DOE does not have surfing as an interscholastic sport. Hawaii is the world leader in surfing and there is no other sport that Hawaii has such significance over. Surfing as a high school sport provides access for many high school surfers to experience the same developmental benefits and opportunities as their peers who play other sports. It is an issue of access, representation and equal opportunity for students. My oldest daughter is the President of the Kaiser High School Surf Club, and a member of the Kaiser High School Swim Team and Water Polo Team. There is great disparity between her access, support and development as a surfer on Kaiser's Surf Club (surfing is currently limited to being a student run club) versus her experiences on the Kaiser Swim and Water Polo team. This disparity between surfing and other high school sports should not exist, and especially not in Hawaii. Passing HB133 is the right thing to do. It is something for the entire state to celebrate. Surfing is a youth sport, growing college sport, olympic sport and professional sport. Hawaii high school surfers deserve to be included as student athletes and access the same resources as their peers. Hawaii High Schools have the opportunity to be national leaders and champions in interscholastic surfing and surpass all other existing high school sports. It is with great conviction that I support HB133.

Sincerely,

Amy Schiffner

DOE parent and Kaiser Surf Club Parent Volunteer

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 1:45:39 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Fairchild	Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I'm writing in support of HB133 to appropriate funds to establish surfing as an interscholastic sport in the Department of Education.

Surfing was designated as an official sport in our schools some years ago, and extensive safety protocols — probably the most extensive among any high school sport — were created. Among these safety protocols, coaches are required to go through water safety training, and athletes are required to go through junior lifeguard-type training. While these mandatory trainings are essential to maintaining the excellent safety record this sport has, funding the trainings does create a barrier to entry for many schools, especially public schools.

For surfing to truly be considered a varsity-level interscholastic sport, it must have an official state championship. HHSAA is an independent nonprofit set up in part to execute state championships for Hawaii high school sports. According to HHSAA's bylaws, at least three of the leagues in the state must hold league championships in order to trigger a state championship. The leagues have varying thresholds, but each league requires a certain number of (club) teams to exist and a certain number of principals to endorse a league championship. Since club teams must pay for or raise their own fees, including a couple of thousand dollars to cover the safety trainings AND the costs of surf meets, many schools are having trouble getting a club started and keeping them going. Thus, we are having trouble getting to the thresholds to trigger a state championship.

Once a state championship exists, surf teams would get funded through the athletic departments of the high schools just like other sports. There are also opportunities to collaborate with ocean safety lifeguards and nonprofits to deliver trainings as the leagues reach higher levels of organization.

The purpose of this bill is to provide the funding needed to get teams established around the state, so that the league thresholds can be met for league tournaments, and a state championship can be held. This is not anticipated to take more than a few years at most. Maui has an existing league championship; OIA and ILH are very close to the threshold; Kauai only needs 2 schools to participate.

Surfing is Hawaii's official sport and is intrinsic to our cultural identity, historically and today. Additionally, surfing teaches and builds water safety skills which are sorely needed in our state

which ranks second in the nation for rate of drowning among residents. Please help surfing get past the tipping point to become a sport our kids can participate in to represent their schools.

Mahalo,

Sarah Fairchild

Executive Director

Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 1:47:02 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessamy Town Hornor	Hawaii Water Safety Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of the Surfing in Schools bill. I am the co-founder of the Hawai‘i Water Safety Coalition and executive editor of the newly published Hawai‘i Water Safety Plan. I am also a Public Health Educator at DOH EMSIPSB in the area of drowning prevention but I am not representing the DOH in this testimony.

In addition to promoting surfing as a sport, the Surfing in Schools bill would help teach water safety and drowning prevention to our youth by offering guidance from experienced coaches and by addressing real world ocean based situations. We also know that safety interventions and rescues happen every day among surfers on our beaches, coastlines and surf breaks. Elevating community-based water and ocean safety makes us all safer in and around the ocean in Hawaii.

LATE

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 3:03:23 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elliana Schiffner	Kaiser High School Surf Club/Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Hawai'i State Legislators,

I am a sophomore student at Kaiser High School and I am submitting testimony in support of HB 133. I am a 4.0 student, a multisport athlete (surfing, swimming and water polo), student council member and the President of the Kaiser Surf Club/Team. I have been a competitive surfer since elementary school and hope to compete professionally in the future. Surfing has offered me incredible opportunities and has been an important means of connecting with community, Hawaiian history and culture. It has also instilled a passion in me to participate in ocean conservation efforts. Surfing as an interscholastic sport will provide access and support to the many student surfers across our islands. Surfers want the opportunity to compete for their schools and represent their families just like in any other sport. Sports support growth and development and teach students skills for success after high school, and surfing is no different in offering these benefits.

Surfing is Hawaii's greatest sport and deserves to be funded and supported by the DOE. Surfing brings community and schools together and helps to elevate youth surfing in Hawaii. Surfing as an official interscholastic sport only serves positively to students, schools, and communities. Supporting surfing is supporting students and Hawaiian culture. By passing HB 133 the state and the DOE can show their commitment to centering Hawaiian culture and ensuring public school students have access to participate and compete in Hawaii's most important sport; surfing.

Sincerely,
Elliana Schiffner
Student, Kaiser High School



LATE

February 12, 2025

State of Hawai'i, House of Representatives
Committee on Education

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Kirsten Hermstad
Executive Director

Ex Officio Legends

Ralph Goto
Brian Keaulana
Archie Kalepa
Mark Cunningham

Aloha Chair Woodson,

I am writing on behalf of the Hawaiian Lifeguard Association (HLA) to express our support for House Bill 133, which seeks to establish surfing as an interscholastic sport and appropriate funds for its implementation. This bill is crucial for the well-being and development of our youth.

Surfing is not only a significant part of our Hawaiian culture, but it also provides a pathway for students to learn advanced water safety skills. By incorporating surfing into the school curriculum, we can ensure that our students are equipped with essential life-saving skills that are particularly important in our island state. Moreover, offering surfing as an interscholastic sport gives the youth of Hawaii a culturally relevant outlet for safe and structured activities, whether before or after school. We know that students who are engaged in sports or extracurricular activities have lower incidences of suicide and feel more connected to their community. This sense of belonging and purpose is vital for their mental and emotional health.

The Hawaiian Lifeguard Association fully supports House Bill 133 because it aligns with our mission to promote water safety and provide positive opportunities for our youth. We urge you to support this bill and help us create a safer and more connected community for our students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Hermstad
Executive Director
Hawaiian Lifeguard Association

Hawaiian Lifeguard Association
P.O. Box 844
Kapa'a, Hawaii 96746
Tax Id 99-0308213
hawaiianlifeguardassociation.org

The mission of the Hawaiian Lifeguard Association (HLA) is to contribute to and advocate for the professional advancement of lifeguards in the State of Hawaii by supporting their efforts to reduce the incidence of drownings and aquatic injuries.

It accomplishes this by: Establishing and maintaining the highest standards of professional surf and open water lifesaving to maximize public safety in Hawaiian aquatic environments. Developing, supporting, and participating in programs that address drowning and aquatic injury prevention strategies. **Serving as a primary resource for aquatic safety education in the State of Hawaii.** Raising funds for water safety programs through available grants and sponsorship agreements. Continuing to actively support the Statewide Junior Lifeguard Program by providing funding for standardized curriculum development, instructor recruitment and training, uniforms and equipment, awards, and travel expenses. Actively supporting the improvement of lifesaving and humanitarian causes, locally, nationally (USLA), and internationally (ILS).

The mission of the Hawaiian Lifeguard Association (HLA) is to contribute to and advocate for the professional advancement of lifeguards in the State of Hawaii by supporting their efforts to reduce the incidence of drownings and aquatic injuries.

It accomplishes this by: Establishing and maintaining the highest standards of professional surf and open water lifesaving to maximize public safety in Hawaiian aquatic environments. Developing, supporting, and participating in programs that address drowning and aquatic injury prevention strategies. **Serving as a primary resource for aquatic safety education in the State of Hawaii.** Raising funds for water safety programs through available grants and sponsorship agreements. Continuing to actively support the Statewide Junior Lifeguard Program by providing funding for standardized curriculum development, instructor recruitment and training, uniforms and equipment, awards, and travel expenses. Actively supporting the improvement of lifesaving and humanitarian causes, locally, nationally (USLA), and internationally (ILS).

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 2:57:13 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Davin Kazama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my SUPPORT OF HB133.

We all know the benefit of high school sports and the community that it breeds. The pride that kids feel from representing their schools, playing with, against, and in front of family and friends...that community is what makes sports so critical in the development of our youth today.

We all know that Hawaiians invented surfing and were once banished from participating in it. There is no sport more engrained in Hawaii's culture, and yet has been actively excluded from Hawaii's list of high school sports.

What we might not know, however, is that because surfing is not an interscholastic sport in Hawaii:

1. Surfers are ineligible for numerous international, national, and local scholarships, including the prestigious HMSA Kaimana Awards & Scholarship Program which has granted higher education funds to Hawaii High School Athletic Association athletes for 20 years. \$100,000 will be granted this year, and not a single dollar will or has ever been received by an HHSAA surfer/athlete, because there is no such thing.

2. Surfers are not viewed as student-athletes on their college applications. They are simply viewed as students, hurting their college options and chances of admission.

3. With no team option, many surfers forsake in-person schooling. These students do their schooling and training individually, separating themselves from their classmates and peers. This isolation and individualism works well for some, but less so for others.

There is a way forward, though. Let's commit to finding a way to get this done. Together, let's put in the work to create opportunities. The passage of HB133 is a necessary step to providing our community with what it's been wanting for decades. Surfing as an HHSAA sport is a dream that is well within our reach and it starts with HB133. Let's do this.

Thank you,

Davin Kazama

P.S. I understand that there is concern over the cost of a surf contest, estimated at \$4,350, versus \$1,800 for a football game. I'd like to respectfully point out that a surf contest features 12 teams (\$362.50 per team, per contest) whereas a football game features 2 teams (\$900 per team, per game). In other words, a surf contest is 60% more cost effective per team, per game. Thank you.

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 3:14:46 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelani Kazama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

I am writing to testify that Surfing should be recognized as an official highschool sport.

First and foremost, Surfing is a unique sport created in Hawaii by Hawaiians. It is only fitting, then, that Hawaii schools with Surf Teams should have the same access to highschool competitions, funding, and recognition for PE credits.

Secondly, Surfing involves a high level of physical activity, practice, conditioning, a team aspect, and athletic skill which is what highschool sports encompass and encourage.

Lastly, many of our local youth dedicate themselves, their time, and their passion to surfing. Most Surfers do not play "traditional" sports like baseball or basketball. We need to give them an option to represent their school in their sport of choice, which is Surfing.

Please consider moving HB133 forward and let's support our Surfing Keiki!

Mahalo!

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:00:23 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
W. Richard Abelmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a lifelong surfer, part of a family that surfs, and a strong supporter of keiki athletics, I wholeheartedly support HB133. Surfing isn't just a pastime in Hawaii- it s a way of life, a cultural tradition passed down through generations, and a vital part of our identity. Whether it's dawn patrol sessions with family, cheering on the next generation of groms, or simply finding peace in the ocean, surfing shapes who we are. This bill is about more than waves - it's about ensuring that surfing remains accessible, protected, and respected as a foundational piece of our community. Surfing keeps our kids active, teaches them discipline and resilience, and connects them to the natural world in a way no other sport can. It fosters a sense of respect ”not just for the ocean, but for the people who share it. By passing HB133, we are committing to preserving the surf breaks that have shaped our history and continue to define our future. We are supporting our keiki in their athletic journeys, backing our local surf industry, and safeguarding the cultural heartbeat of our islands. I urge lawmakers to recognize the significance of this bill and stand with the surfing community. Let's protect the waves that give us so much, ensuring they remain open, accessible, and thriving for generations to come. Mahalo for your time and consideration!

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:12:39 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maggie Hong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Comments: I am writing in full favor of passing HB133 to establish surfing as an interscholastic sport. My daughter is a member of Kaiser's High School's inaugural surf club. And to support her and her love for the sport, I volunteered to be chair of fundraising because this is the biggest obstacle we face. \$3100 is a tremendously steep bill for 8 participating athletes to fundraise all by themselves without financial support from the school or the DOE. I was extremely disappointed to learn that Superintendent Keith Hiyashi gave such a skeptical response to lawmakers' proposed \$42,000 allocation last year to support surfing in schools. He should have taken the money for the surf clubs. While the ocean poses unpredictable conditions, our keiki who want to surf competitively are comfortable in the ocean and their risk for injury is no greater than high-contact interscholastic sports like football or basketball? Moreover, Mr. Hiyashi's requirement that all surfers receive junior lifeguard certification should demonstrate the surfers' level of competence and comfort in the ocean. Surfing is part of our Hawaiian culture and should be embraced and sponsored as such by the state government. Surf clubs operate like a competitive team and should be given the same status as other competitive sports. It is a shame that HDOE does not sponsor the sport that is native to our ancestors and that continues to bring worldwide attention, culture, and money to our island chain. Make this official already! Fund our surfing athletes!

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:37:36 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aaron Ward	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB133, which seeks to recognize surfing as an interscholastic sport in Hawaii. Surfing is deeply embedded in Hawaiian culture and history, dating back centuries as a practice of Native Hawaiians and later becoming a global phenomenon. Given its cultural significance and the abundance of world-class waves in Hawaii, it is only fitting that our students have the opportunity to compete in surfing at the high school level, just as they do in football, volleyball, and other traditional sports. By officially sanctioning surfing as an interscholastic sport, we honor our heritage while providing students with an opportunity to engage in a sport that is both physically and mentally enriching.

Beyond its cultural relevance, surfing offers numerous benefits to student-athletes. It promotes physical fitness, discipline, and perseverance, all of which are essential skills for success both in and out of the water. Additionally, surfing fosters a deep connection with nature and environmental stewardship, encouraging young athletes to care for the ocean and their surroundings. Many students already participate in surfing recreationally or through local competitions, and integrating it into school athletics would provide structure, coaching, and opportunities that could open doors for future careers in professional surfing, coaching, or ocean-related fields. HB133 is an important step in recognizing the unique strengths of Hawaii's students and the sports that define our islands.

Establishing surfing as an interscholastic sport would create equitable opportunities for student-athletes to excel in a sport that is deeply tied to our identity. It would also help level the playing field for those who may not have the resources to compete in private or club competitions. By passing this bill, we invest in our students, our culture, and our future as the birthplace of modern surfing. I urge lawmakers to support HB133 and give Hawaii's youth the opportunity to thrive in a sport that is truly their own.

Mahalo for your consideration!

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 7:51:48 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Averie Hong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I think that we need to pass this bill HB133 to make surfing an official OIA sport because lots of people including me love to surf and would love to represent their school. Hawaii is the birthplace of surfing so why isn't surfing a school sport already? We need support from the government.

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 8:50:50 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane McCallister	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I am a public school teacher at Kaiser High School. I am also a very average surfer who appreciates that not every child is going to be sponsored or go pro. For exactly that reason, surfing should be fully sanctioned, fully funded and fully supported as an inter scholastic sport in Hawaii. I moved to Hawaii from California several years ago. My son, avid surfer, competed on his public school team in middle school. That's right, California (at least on the coasts) supports surfing, not only at the high school level, but in middle school. When we moved to Hawaii, which is where surfing was born (and is such an integral part of the culture), he was devastated to give up competing for his school team. Here's the thing with surfing: when young people are in the water, they cannot get into any mischief. They are off their phones, away from bad influences, and partaking of the goodness of fresh air and exercise. The bumper sticker says that salt water heals. There is truth in that maxim. As a teacher and Kaiser Surf Club advisor, I want my student athletes to have the opportunities that my own son was denied: Give the watermen (and water women) a chance to compete for their schools. Take away the onerous fundraising. Support these student athletes. There are groms all over these islands who need this. There are surfers and bodyboarders who cannot afford entry fees to contests. There are kids from places besides the north shore who can legitimately surf and could be competitive on the world stage--if they had the chance to grow their craft. There are average surfers like me who might have gotten better, and at the very least they could have had fun on a team. Chance 'em! Full send! Toes on the nose! Let the kids surf!

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:10:07 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jody Weiss	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Surfing deserves to be recognized as an interscholastic sport supported by the DOE because it promotes physical fitness, mental well-being, and environmental awareness while fostering discipline and camaraderie among students. As a physically demanding sport, surfing enhances cardiovascular health, balance, and strength, offering students a unique way to stay active outside traditional team sports. Additionally, surfing teaches resilience, focus, and stress management—valuable life skills that benefit students academically and personally.

Moreover, incorporating surfing into school programs would provide opportunities for students in coastal communities to engage in a sport that reflects their local culture and environment. It would also encourage stewardship of the ocean, reinforcing the importance of sustainability and conservation. By recognizing surfing as an official interscholastic sport, the DOE would be expanding athletic opportunities, promoting inclusivity, and supporting students' overall well-being.

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:18:54 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Balazs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

As a community member, I fully support surfing being included among all the sports our keiki enjoy from when they're young to when they become kupuna. Surfing and wave-riding is a piece of culture that we all enjoy and that has blossomed and become a worldwide phenomenon, now even being included in the Olympics. So many of our keiki start when they're just barely tall enough to see over the waves, competing at keiki contests at beaches around the island, like Kalama's or Queen's. As they get older they continue growing through friendly competition at more difficult spots. Supporting our kids' growth in helping them succeed in becoming responsible athletes, with the added task of carrying this cultural symbol along with them is a great opportunity for us to provide some guidance, structure and celebration. The time is here to move us forward. Mahalo nui for accepting this testimony.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:21:41 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Preston Merrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee, I strongly support HB133, which seeks to recognize surfing as an officially sanctioned sport under the Hawaii DOE. As the birthplace of surfing and a state where wave riding is deeply embedded in our culture and history, it is only fitting that we elevate surfing to the same status as other high school sports like football, basketball, and volleyball. Surfing is more than just a pastime in Hawaii, it is an athletic discipline that demands skill, discipline, and perseverance. Many of our young athletes already dedicate themselves to competitive surfing, often balancing training and competition without the same support and recognition provided to student-athletes in DOE-sanctioned sports. By formally incorporating surfing into DOE athletics, we provide structured opportunities for student participation, pathways to scholarships and professional careers, and a greater sense of belonging for students who excel in the sport. Additionally, surfing as a sanctioned sport aligns with Hawaii's values and unique geography. Unlike mainland sports that require costly travel, specialized facilities, or land-intensive infrastructure, our natural environment provides the perfect venue. Surfing fosters not only athleticism but also ocean safety awareness, environmental stewardship, and cultural appreciation, reinforcing the very identity of our islands. By passing HB133, we invest in our youth, our culture, and our future. Surfing deserves the same level of support and legitimacy as other DOE sports, and our student-athletes deserve access to structured competitions, coaching resources, and academic-athletic balance that an official designation would bring. I urge you to pass HB133 and give Hawaii's young surfers the recognition and support they have long deserved. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Preston Merrell

Honolulu, HI

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 10:30:17 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Timur Mirbabayev	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support making surfing an official high school sport in Hawai‘i. Surfing is more than just a recreational activity in our state—it is a vital part of our cultural identity, deeply rooted in Native Hawaiian traditions and celebrated worldwide as a defining feature of Hawai‘i’s history. By recognizing surfing as an official sport, we not only honor our heritage but also provide students with greater opportunities to engage in athletics that reflect their environment and lifestyle. Surfing promotes physical fitness, discipline, and ocean safety awareness, all of which are essential skills for students growing up in an island state. Additionally, the formal inclusion of surfing in high school athletics would create pathways for scholarships, professional careers, and community engagement while encouraging environmental stewardship among young surfers. Many students already surf competitively through private organizations, but making it an official sport would ensure broader accessibility, particularly for those who may not have the financial resources to compete independently. Moreover, other states such as California have already recognized surfing as a high school sport, and as the birthplace of surfing, Hawai‘i should be a leader in this movement. By integrating surfing into our high school athletic programs, we empower our students to excel in a sport that is not only physically and mentally challenging but also uniquely representative of our islands. I urge the committee to support this initiative and help solidify surfing’s place in our education system, ensuring that future generations can continue to embrace and celebrate this essential part of Hawai‘i’s identity. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 11:51:07 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isabelle Simpson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Hawaii State Legislature**Date: 2/12/2025****Subject: Support for HB133- Recognizing surfing as a official High School Sport****Aloha, Chair and Members of the Committee,**

My name is Isabelle Simpson, and I am a highschool student submitting a testimony in strong support of HB133. Here in Hawaii surfing has long been deeply rooted in Hawaiian culture and deserves to be officially recognized as a high school sport. Many students who have grown up in the islands have been surrounded by surfing from a very young age, with many already participating in competitive surfing. Recognizing it as an official sport in high schools would provide them with the same opportunities, support, and recognition as athletes in other sports.

Passing HB133 would not only honor Hawaii's history but also encourage more students to engage in a sport that promotes discipline, perseverance, and respect for the ocean. Surfing being recognized at the highschool level would give young athletes the support they need to excel both in and out of the water.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB133 and give surfing the recognition it deserves.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Isabelle Simpson

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 12:03:41 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Monahan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I whole heartedly support HB133 to establish surfing in schools and give it the financial support it needs. I grew up surfing Waikiki and competed at an amateur level and then went on to surf professionally in longboarding. I always wished there was an opportunity to represent my school (Kaiser HS c/o 2003) and also my state at the national level in the high school divisions. By passing this bill you will be supporting the students by helping them be able to focus on improving their skills instead of wasting time trying to fundraise to pay for the next event. It's about time the birthplace of surfing recognizes it as a sport in schools and gets the funding it deserves.

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 6:54:39 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cody Lew Rose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Cody Rose, and I strongly support making surfing an official high school sport. Surfing is a physically demanding and mentally challenging sport that promotes fitness, discipline, and respect for the environment. It provides an alternative for students who may not participate in traditional sports while fostering resilience, teamwork, and personal growth.

With existing competitive platforms like the NSSA and HSSA Surfing, adding surfing to high school athletics would create new opportunities for student-athletes, including scholarships and career pathways. Communities on Oahu already embrace the sport, and formal recognition would give students the chance to compete and excel while representing their schools.

I urge you to support HB133 and help expand athletic opportunities for all students. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cody Rose

LATE

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 8:53:22 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tezeru	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing to express my strong support for HB133, a bill that would make surfing an official high school sport in Hawai'i. As a student and lifelong resident of Hawai'i, I believe that surfing is an integral part of our culture, history, and identity, and it is only fitting that it be recognized as an official high school sport.

Surfing holds immense significance in Hawai'i, not just as a sport, but as a way of life. For generations, surfing has brought our communities together and served as a source of pride for locals. By making surfing an official high school sport, we not only honor this deep cultural connection but also provide a unique and meaningful opportunity for students to engage in a sport that reflects the spirit of our islands.

Incorporating surfing into the high school sports curriculum would create new avenues for students to develop both physical and mental resilience. Surfing is not just about athleticism; it creates discipline, perseverance, and respect for nature—values that are crucial for personal growth. Furthermore, this bill could offer students, especially those from underserved communities, a chance to participate in a sport that might otherwise be inaccessible to them due to financial constraints or lack of facilities.

I strongly believe that HB133 would not only elevate the sport of surfing but also encourage a healthier, more active lifestyle for young people throughout Hawai'i. I urge you to support this bill and help bring this vision to life for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Tezeru Kapfer

LATE

HB-133-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 10:48:14 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sanoe Kazama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Surfing was born in Hawai'i, yet it is still not a funded sport in high schools statewide. Surfing is offered as a club sport in only a handful of schools, preventing students from experiencing the pride of representing their schools and the joy of building lifelong memories with teammates.

Besides holding immense cultural significance in Hawai'i, surfing provides a much needed study break for students' mental health, disconnecting us from stressors, releasing mood-improving endorphins, and connecting us to Mother Nature. Surfing is also a wonder for physical health, as it's a full body workout that incorporates cardio, strength training, and muscle building all at once. It is a sport that improves the health, both physical and mental, of our students, and connects them to a supportive community like no other. The ocean truly has no boundaries, and the sport of surfing brings people together from all walks of life for the same purpose--to catch a great wave. Everyone in a lineup shares the same stoke as you, cheering you on when you catch a wave, offering guidance to improve on a turn or carve, or just sharing their aloha and knowledge as you talk story with them. One can't help but feel surrounded with aloha as they surf, especially while surfing in a lineup of people who share the same love for the ocean.

I ask the State of Hawai'i to allocate funds so that every high school student statewide has the opportunity to represent their school with pride and reap the numerous benefits of surfing: physically, mentally, and community-wise.

Mahalo for your time!