

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



MIKE LAMBERT
DIRECTOR

VACANT
Deputy Director
Administration

SYLVIA LUKE
LT GOVERNOR
KE KE'ENA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai

715 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

JARED K. REDULLA
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 627

RELATING TO SCHOOL SAFETY

Before the House Committee on Education

Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

State Capitol Conference Room 309, & Videoconference

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) strongly supports House Bill 627.

This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Education for positions to implement and maintain school safety measures.

The Hawai'i State Fusion Center, under the Department of Law Enforcement, seeks to prevent acts of targeted violence via a public health-inspired approach to violence prevention. This bill will support targeted violence prevention and threat assessment efforts that align with best practices. For nearly six years, the Department of Education (DOE) has sought out experts within Hawai'i and at the national level to help build DOE's prevention program. They have researched nationally accepted best practices, considered alternative ways to implement prevention efforts, and tailored that work to fit Hawai'i-specific needs. DOE has previously made financial investments; but even more impressively, they have leveraged significant outside resources and organized substantial volunteer efforts to achieve success. The sustainability of this program requires additional support.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this bill.



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

Date: 02/04/2025

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 0627 RELATING TO SCHOOL SAFETY.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for positions to implement and maintain school safety measures.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 627.

The safety and security of our students is paramount to our Department. However, Department schools as well as complex area and state offices have to grapple with a myriad of both man-made and natural disasters, e.g., active shooter, homelessness, trespassing, vandalism, social media threats, workplace violence, hurricanes, tsunamis, etc. Department personnel training, manpower, technology devices, equipment, and contracts are needed to boost the safety, security, and emergency readiness capabilities of Department schools as well as complex area and state offices.

The Targeted Violence Prevention and Threat Assessment Program Manager will lead the creation and execution of a comprehensive statewide Behavior Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) framework that aligns with the State of Hawaii Targeted Violence Prevention Strategy and Implementation Plans. The individual will also establish clear guidelines, protocols, and procedures for BTAM implementation across all schools, addressing both student and adult populations. Additionally, the position will oversee the development and implementation of training programs for Level 1 and 2 threat assessment teams across the state, ensuring the training is consistent, high-quality, and accessible to all relevant personnel.

Given that the Department already has a fire safety consultant, the Department would like the Fire Safety and Security Technology Program Manager position to serve strictly as the Security Technology Program Manager. This position will oversee existing technological programs such as mass messaging systems, video surveillance cameras, alarms, and door blocking devices.

Additionally, the position will be responsible for proactively researching the latest technological systems that would enhance the safety and security of our schools.

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

LATE

HB-627

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:45:44 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kazuo Todd	Hawaii Fire Department	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kazuo Todd

Fire Chief, Hawai'i Fire Department

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2501

Hilo, HI 96720

Phone: (808) 932-2900

Email: kazuo.todd@hawaiicounty.gov

2/4/25

To:

Chair Justin H. Woodson, Vice Chair Trish La Chica, and Members of the House Committee on Education

Hawai'i State Legislature

Hawai'i State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Strong Support for HB627 – Relating to School Safety

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

I strongly support HB627, which seeks to appropriate funds to the Department of Education for essential school safety measures, including establishing two critical positions: a Targeted Violence Prevention and Threat Assessment Program Manager and a Fire Safety and Security Technology Program Manager.

As Fire Chief of the Hawai'i Fire Department, I oversee emergency response operations across the County of Hawai'i, covering fire suppression, hazardous materials response, ocean safety, and emergency medical services. The safety of our keiki, educators, and school staff is a top priority, and this measure provides necessary resources to proactively address threats, ensure compliance with fire safety standards, and improve emergency preparedness in our schools.

By investing in structured threat assessment programs and dedicated fire safety oversight, HB627 will:

- Enhance school preparedness for active threats by implementing a standardized statewide behavior threat assessment framework in alignment with the Hawai‘i Targeted Violence Prevention Strategy.
- Ensure compliance with fire safety codes, assisting schools in fire alarm system maintenance and meeting annual inspection requirements.
- Strengthen school security measures by supporting hazardous material disposal, school safety equipment upgrades, and emergency response training.

From a fire and emergency management perspective, prevention is our most effective tool. This funding will mitigate risks before incidents occur and provide schools with the expertise necessary to address safety concerns proactively rather than reactively.

I urge the Legislature to pass HB627 and provide the Department of Education with the resources necessary to create and sustain a safer learning environment for Hawai‘i’s students and educators. Mahalo for your time, consideration, and commitment to protecting our schools.

Respectfully,

Kazuo Todd
Fire Chief
Hawai‘i Fire Department



1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 • Fax: (808) 839-7106 • Web: www.hsta.org

Osa Tui, Jr.
President

Logan Okita
Vice President

Cheney Kaku
Secretary-Treasurer

Ann Mahi
Executive Director

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: HB 627 – Relating to School Safety

Position: Support

Hearing: Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 2:00 pm, Room 309

Submitter: Osa Tui, Jr., President - Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) supports HB 627 which appropriates funds to the Department of Education for positions to implement and maintain school safety measures.

The devastating wildfires in Lāhainā and the number of school shootings nationwide underscores the importance for comprehensive safety protocols and emergency preparedness in our schools. HB 627 would provide funding for a Targeted Violence Prevention and Threat Assessment Program Manager and a Fire Safety and Security Technology Program Manager. These two positions would help ensure our schools have the necessary expertise and resources to prevent and respond to emergencies, including fires, natural disasters, and threats of violence.

We recommend the passage of HB 627 to help ensure the safety and well-being of our students, teachers, and staff.

Mahalo.

HB-627

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 7:59:22 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael I Rice	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in SUPPORT of this bill. I would say that the security at our public schools is a joke, but jokes are funny. I have so many horror stories I can tell about Waianae High School itself that would spin heads and should mandate an investigation.

One story in particular highlights failures on several levels in Security at Waianae High School. One student went into the office to report that they were **robbed on campus at gunpoint of illicit drugs and money they had on their person**. HPD was not called but security was dispatched to confront the student in question, this student fled from security off campus and disappeared into Ulu Wehi, when the student returned to campus he was noted to be missing his backpack he was spotted with when he fled and was searched by security. Neither gun nor drugs were found and the student was released. This student later went on to brag about the incident and began threatening security on campus. This student later went on to kill another student off campus at Makaha Park. I was told that DOE has a ZERO tolerance policy when it comes to guns, where students even caught with non-realistic toy guns are suspended. Yet no action was taken in this course and HPD wasn't even called DESPITE a student admitting to selling drugs on campus. I even have it on good authority that security no longer confronts such students out of fear for their lives, and I can't exactly blame them since they're only armed with a cellphone.

I have also heard about security breaches at other schools, such as Kamaile Elementary. There an adult got on campus and snuck into one of the girl's bathrooms and began to masterbate, and an member of staff was only made aware after a young female student came back from the bathroom and said 'miss, get one naked man touching his peepee in the bathroom.'

HB-627

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:37:01 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaili	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am in strong support of this measure because safety of the school students and staff is always a top priority please pass this bill thank you.