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Executive Director

## TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: **SB 1391 - TEACHER-REQUESTED CLASSROOM SUPPLIES**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Hearing: **1/31/2025, Conference Room 229, 3:00pm**

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

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

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association stands in strong support of SB 1391, which appropriates funds to the Department of Education for teacher-requested classroom supplies for fiscal years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

When adjusted for cost-of-living, Hawai'i's teachers are some of the lowest paid educators in the nation. However, our educators have hearts that are much larger than their paychecks, and regularly purchase items like art supplies, notebooks, and food for students with their own money. In fact, a January 2023 survey reported that HSTA members "spend an average of \$953 out of pocket a year on supplies."

We appreciate the intent of the Department of Education allowing educators to use resources like DonorsChoose.org to get classroom supplies through grant writing and crowdfunding. However, a quick look at the unfunded projects on that site indicate that classroom needs continue to outpace the donations required to get supplies to where they're needed most.

We trust educators to know what their students need to thrive in our state's classrooms. Therefore, this bill is a step in the right direction to help teachers get needed classroom supplies. The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI  
SUPERINTENDENT

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

**Date:** 01/31/2025

**Time:** 03:00 PM

**Location:** CR 229 & Videoconference

**Committee:** Senate Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Bill Title:** SB 1391 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

**Purpose of Bill:** Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for teacher-requested classroom supplies for fiscal years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) strongly supports SB 1391.

Through an existing public-private partnership, the Department is able to provide teachers and students with financial resources to fund teacher-led projects for their classroom.

Through our public-private partnership, the Department is able to receive matching funds from individual donors, corporate partners, and foundation partners. Since 2007, 45,055 projects have been funded for 11,072 teachers. Of which, 21,208 projects have been funded for 8,035 teachers with Department funds. With the \$3,000,000 appropriation (and funds matched by donors), the Department estimates it may be able to fund 8,000 more projects next school year. The Department will have 13,000 teachers in the school year 2025-2026.

Funding to continue this program will support teachers with providing books, computers and tablets, art supplies, educational kits and games, lab equipment and other resources that they would not otherwise be able to purchase on their own.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1391.

**SB-1391**

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 1:20:59 PM

Testimony for EDU on 1/31/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnetta Jordan-Piper	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

My name is Johnnetta Jordan-Piper, and I am writing to express my strong support for SB1391.

As a former teacher in the Hawai‘i Department of Education, I understand the financial sacrifices educators make to create meaningful, high-quality learning experiences for their students.

During my time in the classroom, I invested well over the average of \$500—more like thousands of dollars—in curriculum-aligned magazines focused on literacy, STEM, web-based adaptive learning programs, digital tools, and specialized resources to differentiate instruction.

I aimed to ensure that every student, regardless of their learning needs, had access to a well-rounded education. I utilized research-based content to identify what my students needed most and dedicated every minute of the school day to enrich their learning experiences. However, access to those resources was never guaranteed. I paid for what I could, and when that wasn’t enough, I sought donations through Donors Choose, grants, and from family and friends to bridge the gaps.

I never expected my administrators to fund these materials, as they were not budgeted priorities or school-wide initiatives. However, I knew that waiting for permission would mean denying students the opportunities they deserved. Not every teacher can afford to take on that challenge, nor should they have to.

Seeing funding finally allocated for classroom resources is incredibly meaningful. I know firsthand that even a small amount of financial support can make an immeasurable difference in what teachers can provide for their students.

This investment is not just about supplies; it is about ensuring every child has access to the tools and materials that make learning engaging, equitable, and effective. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Johnnetta Jordan-Piper

Former Teacher, Hawai‘i DOE

**LATE**



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 1391**

**RELATING TO EDUCATION**

Senate Committee on Education

Hawai'i State Capitol

January 31, 2025

3:00 p.m.

Conference Room 229

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SB 1391**, which appropriates funds for teacher-requested classroom supplies. This measure helps alleviate the financial burden many teachers personally shoulder to ensure their students have the resources they need to succeed. Given that Native Hawaiians represent the largest demographic of students in the Department of Education (DOE) at 23% of the total population, OHA emphasizes the importance of adequately funding our public schools and supports educators.

A 2023 survey conducted by the Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) revealed that Hawai'i's teachers spend an average of \$950 out of pocket on classroom supplies. Coupled with the high cost of living, this personal spending compounds the already difficult conditions of teaching and surviving in Hawai'i. Addressing these financial burdens is critical, especially as our state is working toward filling vacancies across both English and Kaiapuni (Hawaiian language immersion) programs. To strengthen our education system, we must remove barriers and create incentives that support teacher retention and recruitment.

We recognize the benefits SB 1391 will bring to Hawai'i's educators and students. By recommending support of this bill, we uphold OHA's statutory mandate to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiian beneficiaries within our public schools, alongside all students of Hawai'i.

Accordingly, OHA recommends our BOT support this Committee to **pass SB 1391**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.

**LATE**

**SB-1391**

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 10:05:03 AM

Testimony for EDU on 1/31/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mackenzie Brammer	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

**January 31st, 2024**

**To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair of the Education Committee**

**Senator Donna Kim, Vice Chair of the Education Committee**

**From: Mackenzie Brammer**

**Support of SB1391, Relating to Education**

Aloha, my name is Mackenzie Brammer and I am currently a senior at Kalaheo High School. I strongly support SB1391, relating to education. As a public school student, I have witnessed many instances in which teachers have trouble buying supplies for their students. By the middle of the year, they have trouble keeping up with the constant purchase of basic supplies such as pencils. Asking teachers to buy their own supplies not only becomes a burden on their personal finances, but also on the students they're teaching. It is completely unfair for a student's quality of education to be determined by how much money the teacher has to buy supplies. Passing this bill would encourage equity in our classrooms statewide. Because of this, I would like to ask for your support of SB1391. Thank you for your time.

**LATE**

**SB-1391**

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 10:14:48 AM

Testimony for EDU on 1/31/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
josephine tanimoto	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments: This Bill recognizes Department of Education teachers, not Kupuna Program teachers. The Kupuna Program teachers use out of pocket funds to teach, especially elementary school students. Please include funds for these teachers too

**LATE**

**SB-1391**

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 10:12:57 AM

Testimony for EDU on 1/31/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kate Reynolds	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

**To: Michelle Kidani and Donna Kim,**

**I'm Kate Reynolds and I'm a junior at Kalaheo High School. I support SB1391 because teachers shouldn't have to spend their personal money on supplies for their classrooms. Teachers already have a low salary and work very hard to educate our current and upcoming generations. Teachers should have the resources available to them at no cost to ensure students have a well rounded education. I hope you support this bill to improve our education.**

**Thank you for all you do**

**- Kate Reynolds**