



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO SENATE BILL 440 SD2 HD1
RELATING TO EDUCATION
House Committee on Finance
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 27, 2025

2:00PM

Conference Room 308

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the House Committee on Finance:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) strongly **supports SB440 SD2 HD1**, which establishes the Future Career and Technical Education (CTE) Teacher Scholarship Program. This program aims to address Hawaii's critical shortage of qualified CTE teachers and to support the recruitment and retention of CTE educators in our public schools. The bill aligns with OHA's commitment to enhancing educational opportunities for Native Hawaiians and addressing workforce shortages in key sectors of Hawai'i's economy.

While OHA supports the intent of SB440 SD2 HD1, we recommend a few modifications to better address the needs of Native Hawaiian students and ensure equitable access:

1. **Culturally Relevant Pathways:** While SB440 SD2 HD1 focuses on the University of Hawai'i system, we encourage the inclusion of culturally relevant CTE pathways that are grounded in Hawaiian values and traditions. OHA has proposed initiatives in its biennium budget that could address this gap, ensuring that Native Hawaiian students are prepared for success while honoring their cultural heritage.
2. **Financial Equity:** The scholarships repayment clause could disproportionately burden students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, including many Native Hawaiians. We urge the committee to further review and adjust the provision to ensure that financial terms are equitable and do not discourage students from pursuing this important field.
3. **Impact of shifting from Special Funds to General Funds:** The recommended deletion of language that would establish the Future CTE Teacher Scholarship Special Fund may impact the program's sustainability. Without the establishment of a dedicated special fund, the program would be reliant on annual appropriations, which could limit its long-term stability and effectiveness. A special fund would

provide a consistent and reliable funding mechanism to support the program's objectives over time. OHA respectfully recommends reconsidering the removal of this provision to promote the program's sustainability, success, and ability to meet ongoing workforce development needs.

OHA's mandate, guided by our Strategic Plan *Mana i Maui Ola*, compels us to advocate for measures that support both the educational and professional development of our people. SB440 SD2 HD1 represents an important step in advancing this mission by improving CTE opportunities, creating greater career pathways for Native Hawaiians, and addressing critical workforce shortages.

OHA respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** SB440 SD2 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

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: 03/27/2025

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Finance

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: SB 0440, SD2, HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes the Future Career and Technical Education Teacher Scholarship Program to be administered by the Department of Education to facilitate the recruitment and retention of career and technical education teachers in Hawaii public schools. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of SB 440, SD 2 HD 1 that establishes the future career and technical education (CTE) teacher scholarship program, which will assist in addressing ongoing challenges of recruiting qualified CTE teachers in Hawaii's public schools.

In reviewing the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board list of State Approved Teacher Education Programs (SATEP), approved to prepare teachers for licensure in a CTE field, the Department notes that it would be difficult to award scholarships based on the criteria outlined in this legislation.

<https://hawaiiteacherstandardsboard.org/content/wp-content/uploads/Hawaii-Approved-Programs-by-Teaching-Fields-031225.pdf>

While the Department is aware that the University of Hawaii (UH) at Mānoa, College of Education is making great strides to establish its CTE teacher preparation programs, these programs will not be in place for the 2025-26 school year. Potential scholarship opportunities would therefore be extremely limited.

The Department also notes that the five-year commitment to working in the public school system

(page 2, line 4) is longer than the current three-year commitment required for similar scholarship stipend programs being administered by the Department. This may be viewed as a deterrent to potential teacher candidates for the CTE teaching field.

The Department appreciates this proposal and the inclusion of funding but respectfully recommends that any appropriation be deferred until scholarships can be aligned to approved UH programs.

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



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKAI

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Thursday, March 27, 2025, 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room #308

In consideration of
SB 440 SD2 HD1
RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the House Committee on Finance. The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the intent of SB440 SD2 HD1, which establishes the Future Career and Technical Education (CTE) Teacher Scholarship Program to help address Hawaii's shortage of qualified CTE teachers.

DBEDT recognizes the importance of this effort and appreciates the Legislature's focus on strengthening the educator workforce in alignment with long-term economic goals. To enhance the impact and sustainability of this measure, we respectfully offer the following comments:

- **Align Scholarships with High-Demand Sectors** – To fully support Hawaii's economic diversification, we encourage prioritization of scholarship recipients who intend to teach in CTE pathways connected to sectors such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, energy, creative industries, and agriculture.
- **Expand Eligibility** – Current language limits participation to students enrolled in University of Hawaii teacher education programs. We recommend considering

students from other accredited in-state institutions and Hawaii residents enrolled in out-of-state programs who plan to return, to broaden the local teacher pipeline.

- **Support for Industry Engagement** – CTE teachers must remain connected to industry trends. Including externship or industry-immersion opportunities for teachers would help ensure their instruction remains relevant and workforce-aligned.
- **Retention and Mentorship** – Recruitment alone is not sufficient. Scholarship recipients may benefit from structured mentorship and ongoing professional development to improve retention and program impact.
- **Tracking and Evaluation** – A simple reporting framework could help track completion rates, DOE placement, and retention, ensuring the program delivers long-term workforce outcomes.
- **Funding Sustainability** – We note that the bill, in its current form, removes the dedicated special fund previously proposed. Without a reinvestment mechanism, the program may be less sustainable over time and more reliant on recurring appropriations.

We also acknowledge the Department of Education's testimony indicating the need for additional resources to implement this program effectively, and we support a careful review of administrative capacity to ensure successful delivery.

DBEDT appreciates the Legislature's efforts to strengthen Hawaii's CTE teacher workforce and recognizes the potential of this scholarship program to support that goal. With thoughtful adjustments—particularly around workforce alignment, program accessibility, and long-term funding—this measure can play a meaningful role in preparing students for high-demand careers and supporting Hawaii's broader economic development strategy. We remain committed to collaborating across agencies and sectors to build a more resilient, future-ready workforce.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 2:00PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference**

RE: HB448 SD2 HD1 Relating to Technology Enablement

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports Senate Bill 440 Senate Draft 2 House Draft 1 (SB440 SD2 HD1), which establishes the Future Career and Technical Education Teacher Scholarship Program to be administered by the Department of Education to facilitate the recruitment and retention of career and technical education teachers in Hawaii public schools.

SB440 SD2 HD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Small Business. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

Hawaii faces a growing need for qualified career and technical education teachers in its public schools to ensure students are adequately prepared for an evolving workforce. This measure proposes the creation of a future career and technical education teacher scholarship program, administered by the Department of Education, to recruit and retain educators in these critical subject areas. Eligible individuals must be enrolled at a University of Hawaii campus under resident tuition status and be pursuing a state-approved teacher education program.

By including financial support to a commitment to teach career and technical education in Hawaii, this measure provides both a strong incentive for prospective teachers and a sustainable pathway to fill teaching shortages in key technical fields. The provision for repayment ensures accountability while still offering potential deferment or forgiveness under specific hardship scenarios. The Chamber supports this proposal because it creates a reliable pipeline of specialized educators, ultimately strengthening Hawaii's workforce and stimulating long-term economic growth.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 440 Senate Draft House Draft 2. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.