



Written Testimony before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, March 23, 2021 (2:00 pm)

**RE: HCR68/HR56 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CREATE A LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH GOALS TO INCREASE TREE CANOPIES ON PUBLIC SCHOOL GROUNDS, DOCUMENT EXISTING INVENTORY AND TALENT, AND IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT AND SUSTAIN THE PLAN.**

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, Members of the Committee on Education:

Trees for Honolulu's Future (TFHF) is a nonprofit organization with a vision for a tree-filled island that preserves and enhances our quality of life, especially in the face of climate change.

We strongly support the above-referenced resolutions, which request the state Department of Education (DOE) to create a landscape management plan and more. We do suggest two minor amendments, namely:

- Specifying that the 2 degree in temperature rise in the first Whereas clause as either Celsius scale or, as we suspect it is, Fahrenheit.
- Noting in the Resolutions that properly placed tree canopy will provide all the benefits already cited plus cool buildings and thus lower electricity cost where classrooms are air-conditioned leaving more operating funds to go for other support of the schools and students.

Thank you to the sponsors of this resolution for acknowledging the multiple benefits of trees that are well documented by research and noted in the resolution. Sadly though, Honolulu has been losing urban tree canopy over the past years and increasing the tree canopy at our public schools can help reverse this concerning trend.

TFHF stands ready to work with the DOE on implementation. In fact, in 2020, we had proposed a Grant-in-Aid to do much of what is described in these resolutions as TFHF could bring outside expert resources to the DOE to update its 1981 Landscape Practices and Procedures manual and its 1996 Tree Selection manual. We have the utmost respect for the DOE arborist, but she has a lot on her plate. Bringing external resources to help the department would likely be more efficient and faster than the DOE tackling this necessary task internally.

At the end of the day, it's all about the Right Tree, in the Right Place, getting the Right Care. By passing these resolutions, with the above amendments, to the Committee on Finance, you are taking a critical step to ensure this simple 3-step mantra occurs, and we create a better future for our keiki, schools, and island home.

Thank you.

Daniel Dinell, President

**HONOLULU is HOT TREES are COOL**

Visit us: [www.TreesForHonolulu.org](http://www.TreesForHonolulu.org) Contact us: [info@TreesForHonolulu.org](mailto:info@TreesForHonolulu.org) Voice/Fax/Text: 808-707-6353

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March 21, 2021

To: Chair Woodson  
Vice Chair Kapela  
House Committee on Education

RE: **SUPPORT for HCR68/HR56**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **support of HCR68/HR56**. Blue Zones Project was brought to Hawaii by HMSA to help increase the overall well-being of our communities and to make Hawaii a healthier, happier place to live, work and play. To accomplish that goal, we seek opportunities to lower obesity rates, tobacco use, and chronic diseases.

A robust tree canopy can greatly contribute to the public health of our communities. In both rural and urban communities, tree canopy provides protection from rain, sun, and heat and reduces the harms from tailpipe emissions. With more trees, our neighborhoods become more livable by promoting the use of active transportation, such as walking and biking, allowing for regular physical activity. Trees can also support psychological well-being by increasing vigor and reducing anxiety, depression, and anger.<sup>1</sup>

Planting more trees also has significant economic impacts; with a planting cost of \$250-\$600 (including first three years of maintenance), a single street tree returns over \$90,000 of direct benefits in the lifetime of the tree, not including aesthetic, social, and natural benefits.<sup>2</sup>

Given the importance of creating healthier school environments for our keiki, we urge you to support this resolution. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **support of HCR68/HR56**.

Sincerely,

Colby Takeda, MPH, MBA  
Senior Manager

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<sup>1</sup> Li, Q. (2010). Effect of forest bathing trips on human immune function. *Environmental Health and Preventative Medicine*, 15(1).

<sup>2</sup> Burden, D. (2016). 22 reasons trees in cities keep us healthy and save us money. *Blue Zones*.

**HR-56**

Submitted on: 3/21/2021 12:34:04 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/23/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Wai Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Trees are educational opportunities for our schools, not burdens as many people portrait them. As a citizen I am glad to see legislation to help schools with trees. Where our children will grow up near them, learn about them and care for them.

I support HB56.

Wai

**HR-56**

Submitted on: 3/22/2021 12:21:18 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/23/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Daniel Simonich	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this.

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Testimony of John M. Knox in Support of HR56  
for House Education Committee Hearing March 23, 2021

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee. I am John M. Knox, a Waimānalo resident whose children once attended public schools. I am active in several organizations, including Trees for Honolulu's Future, but I am testifying today as an individual.

- Especially back when my kids went to elementary school, the unshaded playgrounds were already hot. With climate change, they're getting hotter. It will get worse.
- Canopy is a major tool to allow our kids the same on-site recreational opportunities most of us had in our own school days. But it needs campus planners to have access to expertise about what trees are best for any site, provide the most actual shade, and require the relatively least maintenance and threat to structures in event of severe storms, which are also increasing.
- This resolution simply requires the Dept. of Education to take a systematic approach to landscape management plans and to document resources with additional tree information for campus landscape planners. That makes sense!
- It is not intended to replace the need for air-conditioning, and perhaps a clarifying phrase or sentence to that effect would be helpful.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony!