



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

Date: 02/02/2023

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 0601 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates moneys for the Department of Education to contract with a qualified nonprofit organization to establish an aquatic safety education program for elementary school students.

Department's Position:

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) offers comments on HB 601.

As an island state, the Department recognizes the important role of public education in addressing water safety education and, as such, is moving forward to address this issue. Currently, the Department requires ocean safety education in all elementary schools. It promotes ocean safety and stewardship awareness education through an annual memo and distribution of Nā Kama Kai student activity booklets in English to all Department elementary schools and in 'ōlelo Hawai'i to all Kaiapuni elementary schools. In addition, the Department is collaborating with Nā Kama Kai to sponsor a Professional Development Educate, Empower, Excel (PDE3) credit course to provide additional training and professional development for school staff on this topic.

If passed, this bill will place an undue burden on the Department, which will require additional personnel and resources to support the management and execution of a contract with a nonprofit organization. Activities include conducting a needs assessment, executing the procurement contract process per state guidelines, managing funds, program promotion, communication, and implementation.

While aquatic safety is not an explicit standard or performance indicator in Health or Physical Education, it could be addressed under the broad topic of safety. Students will

require multiple lessons to learn and practice the requisite skills to achieve proficiency in water safety, personal survival skills, and water rescue. Given the limited amount of time dedicated to Health and Physical Education in the school setting, it will prove difficult to include this new content along with other skills and topic areas that are required based on the Content Standards and Performance Indicators for Health and Physical Education.

An aquatic safety education program that includes practicing skills in the water presents additional challenges (e.g., transportation to pools, lifeguards, instructors) that will need to be addressed. While the Department appreciates the appropriation in this bill, properly implementing and sustaining this program will require additional, sustained funding to ensure the longevity of this program.

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



**OUTRIGGER
DUKE KAHANAMOKU
FOUNDATION**

P. O. BOX 160924
HONOLULU, HI 96816

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Testimony to the Committee on Education

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair; Rep. Lisa Marten, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 2, 2023, 2:00 P.M.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

RE: HB 601, Relating to Education

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and members of the Committee on Education:

On behalf of the Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation, I would like to testify in **strong support of HB 601** to contract with a qualified nonprofit organization to establish an aquatic safety education program for elementary school students. Historically Hawaii had one of the strongest waterman cultures in the world, but the recent statistics show a different picture:

- **Nationally, Hawaii ranked 2nd highest for rate of drowning among residents** in the 2016-2020 period. (HI Department of Health data)
- **96% of children 0-17 years who died by drowning in the period 2014-2018 in Hawaii were local residents.** (HI Department of Health data)
- **Hawaii children from lower income communities have significantly less aquatic safety skill competence.** (Hawaii Aquatics Academy Income Disparity Report)

The **World Health Organization** and the **United Nations** have both published reports which recommend community-wide aquatics education for children as one of the highest priority strategies for governments to reduce drowning.

We all know the cost-of-living challenges of raising children in Hawaii. There are many families that do not have the means, proximity, or knowledge to teach aquatics safety to their kids, nor the ability to pay for swim lessons. Aquatics safety in our public schools is critical education for our keiki and will save lives.

Thank you,

Sarah Fairchild

Executive Director

DUKE'S CREED:

"In Hawai'i, we greet friends, loved ones or strangers with Aloha, which means with love. Aloha is the key word to the universal spirit of real hospitality, which makes Hawai'i renowned as the world's center of understanding and fellowship. Try meeting or leaving people with Aloha. You'll be surprised by their reaction. I believe it and it is my creed. Aloha to you."

DUKE PAOA KAHANAMOKU



February 2, 2023
2:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference
Conference Room 309
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

To: Rep. Justin H Woodson, Chair
Rep. Lisa Marten, Vice Chair

Aloha, my name is Lisa Dau representing Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition (KIPC) which is a non-profit agency with a mission to decrease childhood injuries. **KIPC SUPPORTS HB601**, which would provide DOE funding for aquatic safety lessons for elementary-aged children during school hours.

Drowning is a leading cause of death among school-aged children. Differences in swimming ability, access to pools and swim lessons, poor parental swimming skills, lower levels of education, and income and cultural differences are all possible contributing factors.

According to the American Red Cross, there are five essential steps for drowning prevention: 1) maintain close contact/supervision with children; 2) provide adequate fencing and barriers around pools and bodies of water; 3) children and inexperienced swimmers should wear life vests; 4) swim in lifeguarded areas; and **5) learn swimming and water safety survival skills.**

Safe Kids Worldwide conducted research in 2016 and they reported that children in rural areas are less likely to participate in swim lessons, and that participation in formal swim lessons is related to household income, affordability, and accessibility. These findings have implications for organizations trying to increase the number of children enrolled in swim lessons, particularly those from underserved communities. (MacKay JM, Steel A, Dykstra H, Wheeler T, Samuel E, Green A. Keeping Kids Safe In and Around Water: Exploring Misconceptions that Lead to Drowning. Washington, D.C.: Safe Kids Worldwide, June 2016.)

HB601 addresses issues related to providing swim lessons and water safety survival skills to a greater number of children while also reducing disparities. Please consider passing this bill.

Thank you,
Lisa Dau, RN, MBA, BSN
Injury Prevention Coordinator



To: Representative Woodson, Chair
Representative Marten, Vice Chair
House Committee on Education

Re: HB601, relating to education
2:00 p.m., Feb. 2, 2023

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten and committee members:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in SUPPORT of House Bill 601, relating to education.**

Between 2016 and 2020, Hawai'i had the second highest drowning deaths, second only to Alaska. One might think that these fatalities were only unassuming visitors. However, the Hawai'i Department of Health identified that we also had the **second highest resident drowning fatality rate** from 2013 to 2017.

It is important that drowning is especially pronounced for children. Both nationally and locally, drowning was among the leading causes of injury mortality for children ages 1 to 4. Nationally, for keiki ages 5 to 14 years old, it is the second leading cause of unintentional injury death, behind only motor vehicle crashes.

In an island state, it is critically important that our children and youth learn the basics of aquatic safety. Our keiki not only need to learn how to safely navigate pools but also the ocean.

HB601 is an important step toward getting all children the training they need to be safe in and around water. **We appreciate that the appropriation will be so that children in public school settings will have the benefit of getting this education.** We strongly support this investment in an aquatic safety education program. We ask that the committee similarly support this measure.

Mahalo,

Ke'ōpū Reelitz
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

LATE

Aloha Representative Woodson and Representative Marten,

I am writing to submit testimony in strong support of HB601 Relating to Education that would provide DOE funding for aquatic safety lessons for elementary-aged children during school hours. This funding is much-needed to address the fact that aquatic injury is a leading cause of death of elementary-aged children in Hawaii. There is currently no state-sponsored support for schools who wish to adopt such programming.

I am writing first as a bereaved parent and wife - I lost my daughter Mina and my husband Mark to drowning in an ocean accident in 2016. Over the last six years I have advocated for aquatic safety initiatives in Hawaii because I do not want any other family to go through what I have. ***Drowning is preventable with proper education and safety measures.*** The solution proposed in HB601 has proven to be successful as a model in addressing this issue in our public schools.

I recently joined the staff of Hawaii Aquatic Foundation as I believe in their model of teaching aquatic safety education to our keiki during school-hours. It is not a learn to swim program but rather an injury prevention intervention based on international and national best practices. ***What we teach today could save a life tomorrow.***

Since 2017 we have researched, developed and offered standards-based aquatic safety courses to more than 2500 children during school hours by utilizing pools that are not in use during those times. Pools after school are often full and lessons are too expensive for many families. We have offered courses to public, charter, and private schools on Oahu, the Big Island, Kauai, and Maui, and with further funding we hope to take this program to schools statewide. We have also applied for two GIAs this year, one is for OP and the other is for a CIP to repair and improve the Palama Settlement aquatics center with solar heating to meet American Red Cross standards so that our home pool can be used year round. There are over 5000 K-5 students within a two-mile radius of Palama Settlement, most of which are classified as Title 1 low-income. This is a strong start, but we need to scale out to reach more students.

The Need and the Solution

To offer a more in-depth understanding of the need, I have attached an infographic as well as two reports from the Hawaii Aquatics Foundation from data gathered via our Academy's aquatic safety courses which feature a series of 10 half hour lessons, with 2 in the classroom and 8 in the pool.

The 2018-2019 Assessment Report features data from 564 2nd grade public, private, and charter school students in five different school districts on the islands of Kaua'i, Maui, and O'ahu. It provides an evaluation of standards-based assessments for student proficiency, before and after instruction, in three aquatic motor skills identified as essential components of personal aquatic safety competency.

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- "The evaluations in this report of pre-instruction assessments for three fundamental aquatic motor

- skills strongly suggest a majority of Hawai'i's elementary school students lack the set of basic skills identified as essential for drowning avoidance and recovery."
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- "The multi-skill evaluation of post-instruction assessments, when compared to pre-instruction assessments,
- demonstrates that measurable progress can be achieved toward the development of personal aquatic safety competence through formal aquatic safety education..."
-

Overcoming the Opportunity Gap

I have also attached the Income Disparity Report that demonstrates the following:

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- "Data shows that Hawai'i's children from lower-income areas is consistent with national statistics
- and reports that indicate significantly reduced water safety and swimming skill competence when compared to moderate-income and higher-income population groups."
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- "The opportunity gap in aquatic safety skill competence between the two income groups can be overcome
- by participation in a formal aquatic safety education program."
-

Again, this bill, which allows schools who wish to teach aquatic safety education to do so, is worthy of support.

Mahalo nui for your consideration,
Jessamy Town Hornor

--

Community Engagement Manager
Hawaii Aquatics Foundation
www.hawaiiaquaticacademy.org

IN SUPPORT of HB601 Relating to Education

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten

2:00pm VIA Zoom

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Marten, and members of the committee,

My name is Caroline Whitesel and I am a graduate student in the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health and the University of Hawaii at Mānoa. My immediate goal is to earn my Master of Social Work and continue working with vulnerable youths.

The following information is based on my opinion alone and is not affiliated with the University of Hawaii or the UH School of Social Work and Public Health. I am **IN STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 601 Relating to Education for the following reasons:

- Drawing is the leading cause of death of children aged 1-4 and the second leading cause of death in children aged 5-14, according to the CDC. In a study conducted by the Hawaii Aquatics Academy, 13% of a sample of Hawaii students could tread water for 60 seconds and only 12% could float for 30 seconds. Educating elementary students on water safety will save thousands of preventable deaths.
- Investing in a water safety program for elementary students would alleviate the many burdens families face trying to enroll their children in swim lessons. With the demand for swim lessons on the rise, the cost of these lessons are skyrocketing and open positions for enrollment are quickly being filled. This leaves families without a choice: they simply cannot teach their child water safety, resulting a great vulnerability for the child. HB601 will create more accessible education for all youths facing these burdens.
- I am a Red-Cross Certified Water Safety Instructor and have observed the absolute necessity of water safety skills. During the summer of 2021, I witnessed three children endure near drowning experiences and one child survive a drowning experience after medical professionals worked to save their life. All of these children were between the ages of 3-5. With a stronger understanding of water safety skills, these experiences could have been avoided altogether.

With this in mind, I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB601 Relating to Education, because it will give our children the best chance at creating a strong foundation of water safety skills. With this investment, our children will have the knowledge and ability to act swiftly in dangerous situations, saving not only themselves, but their friends as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 601 Relating to Education.

Best,

Caroline Whitesel

cmwhites@hawaii.edu

HB-601

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 1:48:08 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/2/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nyla Bonisa	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Date: Feb 2, 2023

To: Chairperson Justin H. Woodson
Vice Chairperson Lisa Marten
Members of the EDN committee

From: Nyla Bonisa

Subject: Support of House Bill 601, Relating to EDUCATION

Aloha. My name is Nyla Bonisa, I am a sophomore at Kalaheo High School in Kailua. Today, I would like to testify in support of House Bill 601. I firmly believe that this bill will benefit Hawaii's youth, as "an estimated half of Hawaii kids do not know how to swim." In addition to this, "Drowning is the leading cause of death for *keiki* under [the age of] five and the second leading cause of death for people under 14." (KHON 2022)

All children in Hawaii are surrounded by beaches, however, many fear the water and have never learned how to swim. One of the main reasons that stop children from learning how to swim is the expensive prices. The average estimated cost of one swimming lesson per child in Hawaii is \$70. As a girl with one other sibling, it would cost my family \$140 dollars per lesson. Imagine how expensive it would be for families with more than two children, which is very common.

In order to protect the children of Hawaii from drowning, this bill needs to be passed. Hawaii's *keiki* should be offered the opportunity to learn basic water skills, so that if they face danger, they are able to save themselves.

Mahalo for your time and consideration, I humbly ask for your support for House Bill 601.

HB-601

Submitted on: 2/1/2023 12:30:50 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/2/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shauna Springer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kāko‘o wau! I support!

HB-601

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 6:55:24 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/2/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Giles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. We live in an island community and everyone should be educated on water safety. This could prevent accidents from happening and could potentially save more lives. It takes only a few minutes to damage the brain. What if you could save someone right next to you before the ambulance got there? This is important!

HB-601

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 7:33:33 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/2/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Thank you for hearing testimony on this critical issue. When I was a young mother, we had a close family friend experience this tragedy. Since then, I have made it my personal mission to get swim classes for my kid and insisted on lessons for my nieces and nephews.

This type of death is 100% preventable, and as an island nation, this is crucial for our children to learn water safety. Offering it in school provides access to children whose parents may be unable to take them to free lessons and removes many barriers that currently exist.

Thank you,

Me Fuimaono-Poe

LATE

HB-601

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 9:36:57 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/2/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenny Yagodich	Malama pupukea-Waimea	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

We support HB601. All children in Hawai'i should be provided equal access to standards-based aquatic safety education programs.

Mahalo

LATE

HB-601

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 10:36:48 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/2/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tammie Healani Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB601 Relating to Education

HB-601

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 1:53:43 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/2/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Vitek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a father to two elementary students and a lifeguard for twenty years I support HB601. It would be a huge advantage for kids to learn ocean knowledge at the elementary level. The knowledge the kids learn could save a life and the cost of one life saved is unmeasurable. Thank you for your time,

Joseph Vitek