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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wil Okabe
President
Joan Kamila Lewis
Vice President
Colleen Pasco
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

DATE: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2015

RE: S.B. 1215 - RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

PERSON TESTIFYING: WIL OKABE
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

The Honorable Chair Michelle Kidani, Honorable Vice Chair Breene Harimoto and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) **supports S.B. 1215**, relating to charter schools.

HSTA is the exclusive representative of more than 13,500 public and charter school teachers statewide. HSTA is the state affiliate, of the 3.2 million members of the National Education Association.

Over 20 years ago, the state of Hawai'i committed itself to embracing the educational innovations made possible outside of the Department of Education by enacting public charter school legislation.

Since then, the state has further committed itself by enacting legislation to expand our public charter school system.

The legislation before you provides our public charter school system the assistance needed to be the best it can be. HSTA supports innovation in public education. The core assumptions that inform the charter school concepts - innovation, autonomy, and accountability - indicate that charter schools have the potential to facilitate positive change and should be qualitatively different from what is available in mainstream public schools.

As such, on behalf of Hawai'i's 13,500 public and public charter school teachers, the Hawai'i State Teachers' Association stands in **support of S.B. 1215**.