

February 6, 2015

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair
 Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair
 Members of the Senate Education Committee

From: Danson Honda

Subject: Support of Senate Bill 834, Voting Rights for the Board of Education Student Member

Aloha! My name is Danson Honda, and I am the 2014-2015 student member of the Hawaii State Board of Education. I strongly believe in Senate Bill 834, and would like to humbly ask for your support.

I would like to start off by acknowledging claims against allowing the student to vote, and provide a student's perspective on those claims:

Claim	Counter
Almost each year there is a new student on the Board of Education. Why should a position with inexperienced membership be given voting rights?	Board of Education members are able to vote on issues, regardless of their experience on the Board. A newly sworn in member has the same voting rights as a veteran member. Not allowing students to have a vote will make the student feel that he/she is incompetent to other Board members, and in turn discourage the student from actively engaging in Board of Education matters.
Allowing the student to have a voting right will put a tremendous amount of pressure on the student. For the sake of the student, the student should not have a vote.	It is the Hawaii State Student Council's responsibility to conduct a statewide selection process for the BOE student member and to ensure that the selected student will understand the duties and responsibilities of this position.
The student member of the Board of Education is a current high school student and is pulled out of class to attend meetings. Why should this student be allowed to vote, given that he/she is occupied with school?	Other BOE members are occupied with their own outside jobs as well. The student should even more so be allowed to vote and make use of the time he/she is being pulled out of school to attend meetings.
Would the student vote even matter?	To a student, having a vote is not about having a vote to vote against other Board members. It's about truly having a say in our education system, regardless of whether or not other Board members would have voted the same way.

With voter turnout rate at an all time low, it is ever more so important to help create an environment where young minds truly believe their voice matters.

A vote on the Board of Education can help achieve that.

It will allow youth to have true say in their education system, and serve as a catalyst for future growth of youth participation in democracy.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I truly hope that you will support Senate Bill 834.