



LATE

1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

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. 849 - 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. 849**, 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. 849**.

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TESTIMONY TO
THE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON EDUCATION

Friday, February 6, 2015
1:15 PM
Conference Room 229

RE: SB 849 – Relating to Charter Schools

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Harimoto, and members of the Committee:

My name is Cathy Ogawa, former head of a private, independent Honolulu preschool, teacher and school liaison to a charter school.

I would like to express my strong support of SB 849, a bill for an act that would authorize the state public charter school commission to request the issuance of general obligation bonds to finance public charter school facilities.

I personally believe in the public purpose of education and that families should have choices when it comes to the education of their children. Charter schools in Hawai'i provide that option for families who otherwise may not be able to find a public school that shares their educational and cultural values, nor have the means to attend a private, independent school.

I directly experienced the facilities challenges of a small charter school as the administration and staff, along with families and the community, put in over 400 hours to prepare the school for the new school year with less than a month until opening.

I humbly ask for your consideration of this very important issue to help charter schools to return their focus to providing a quality education for their keiki.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.
