

CATHERINE PAYNE
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII

STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION ('AHA KULA HO'ĀMANA)

http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov 1111 Bishop Street, Suite 516, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

FOR: HB 2167 Relating to Charter Schools

DATE: January 31, 2018

TIME: 2:05 PM

COMMITTEE: House Committee on Education

ROOM: Conference Room 309

FROM: Sione Thompson, Executive Director

State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kong and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission ("Commission") appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 2167**, which seeks to provide funding for start-up grants for pre-opening charter schools. We are grateful to Chair Woodson and this committee for the introduction of this proposal and for your continued interest in public charter schools as a potential part of the solution to school overcrowding.

The Commission has particularly welcomed applications to create schools that would provide additional enrollment capacity in geographic areas where existing department of education schools are already exceeding, have already reached, or are projected to reach or exceed, full enrollment capacity; or that would present alternatives for improving academic outcomes in their communities. While welcoming such proposals, the Commission has not lowered its rigorous approval bar for these applications.

The targeted availability of grants for start-up schools would add a significant incentive for these especially desirable applications and could provide important support to some newly created, pre-opening schools in their start-up year before they become fully operational. Because pre-opening charter schools will not receive their funding to open and operate the new school until July 20th of the year they are scheduled to open their doors, having this start-up grant would assist new charters in this critical time period.

For a time before the Commission's creation, start-up grants were made available to newly approved pre-opening schools. Hawaii is not currently in a position to avail itself of federal grants that have been created for this important purpose, although that is something the Commission hopes to pursue in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.





HB2167 RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

House Committee on Education

<u>January 31, 2018</u> 2:05 PM Room 309

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) <u>SUPPORTS</u> HB2167, which appropriates funding for fiscal year 2018-2019, to assist with newly-approved public charter schools with the substantial pre-opening costs associated with meeting the State Public Charter School Commission's (Commission's) priority needs.

For a period of time prior to the Commission's creation in Act 130, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2012, state start-up grants were made available to newly approved, pre-opening public charter schools, to assist with their substantial pre-opening costs. These state start-up grants provided much needed funding to new public charter schools, particularly as these schools endeavored to establish themselves in their various communities, explore fundraising opportunities, and meet other start-up priorities. Currently, however, pre-opening public charter schools have no such state assistance in meeting their numerous fiscal challenges. Furthermore, Hawai'i Revised Statutes Section 302D-14.5 precludes pre-opening schools from accessing per-pupil and other funding available to operational public charter schools, exacerbating their fiscal burden during this critical period in their development.

OHA has been a strong supporter of Hawai'i's public charter schools, many of which provide a culturally-grounded education for Native Hawaiian and other children. Seventeen of the thirty-six public charter schools in Hawai'i are Hawaiian-focused and Hawaiian language immersion charter schools, in which OHA has invested over \$18.6 million between FY 2005-2006 and FY 2016-2017. On October 19, 2017, the OHA Board of Trustees approved an additional \$3 million total to these charter schools for FY 2017–2018 and FY 2018-2019. OHA has made this investment because research has found that Hawaiian students exposed to culturally-driven educational strategies have a stronger sense of socio-emotional well-being, deeper engagement with their schools, and a stronger commitment to civic activities in their community, factors which are directly tied to greater academic achievement. Easing the fiscal burdens borne by pre-opening public charter schools may allow a greater number of students, including Native Hawaiian students, to access the advantages of a culturally-driven education through our public charter school system.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to <u>PASS</u> HB2167. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



January 31, 2018

To: Honorable Justin Woodson, Chair

Honorable Sam Satoru Kong, Vice Chair

House Committee on Education

From: Jeannine Souki, Executive Director

Hawaii Public Charter Schools Network

Re: HB 2167 - RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS - SUPORT

Conference Room 309 - Hawaii State Capitol - Jan. 31, 2017, 2:05 P.M.

On behalf of the Hawaii Public Charter School Network (HPCSN), I respectfully submit our testimony for HB 2167, Relating to Charter Schools.

HPCSN strongly supports this bill to appropriate start-up funding for newly approved, preopening public charter schools. We cannot emphasize enough how important the provision of state start-up grants has contributed to the successful establishment of several public charter schools in Hawai'i. Charter schools with startup assistance gained firmer footing and built more stability in the early years than those without any assistance.

Pre-opening funding helps a newly approved charter school quickly transition from the applicant phase to secure start-up resources needed to meet a multitude of requirements for a new charter school, including: securing a facility or property; obtaining any necessary permits, capital improvements and retro-fitments the school; acquiring furnishings, equipment, curriculum and supplies; applying for utilities; preparing to meet state health and safety standards; meeting state collective bargaining and other state or federal requirements; setting up a school meal and/or after school program; accessing technical assistance to establish its operations; recruiting and hiring teachers and staff; and enrolling students, all before a school is able to open its doors and receive the first allocation of per pupil charter school funds to pay for its operations.

Any traditional district school has levels of start-up funding to underwrite capital and operational costs to prepare before it can open its doors to students. Charter schools, which have been authorized for 18 years now and are part of the state education system, should be afforded equitable resources. For these reasons, we humbly urge your support for this appropriation.

Mahalo for your consideration! HPCSN works to improve the operation and governance of public charter schools in Hawai'i and to be a voice for children and families that seek choices and quality in an independent public-school setting.





46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Executive Director

TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 2167, RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

House Committee on Education Hon. Justin H. Woodson, Chair Hon. Sam Satoru Kong, Vice Chair

Wednesday, January 31, 2018, 2:05 PM State Capitol, Conference Room 309

Honorable Chair Woodson and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 400 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony <u>in opposition to</u> House Bill 2167, relating to charter schools.

We appreciate this bill's effort to ease overcrowding in Hawai'i's public schools, but oppose the diversion of public funds and resources from public school classrooms to privately governed charter schools.

In May of 2015, the state revoked the charter for Halau Lokahi Public Charter School. When the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission (HSPCSC) combed through the school's records, they noted approximately \$100,000 in questionable expenditures, which were reported to the Attorney General's Office for investigation. Lokahi's director and two of its employees were arrested. Moreover, the school's rent payments reached \$33,000 per month, an unsustainable amount for the struggling school. To cut costs, Lokahi contracted a for-profit charter school company from the mainland to provide online curricula. This and other other savings efforts were to no avail, however, as the school eventually closed and its charter was rescinded, leaving local taxpayers potentially on the hook for hundreds of thousands of dollars in contracted debt.

While the experience of Lokahi does not represent all charter schools, it speaks to the potential pitfalls involved in privatizing public education. Originally intended to be sites of educational innovation, charter schools have become "school choice" models producing mixed results. According to HSPCSC, charter schools differ from traditional public schools in three ways:

• *Choice:* Charter schools give families the opportunity to **choose** the school most suitable for their children's educational well being. Teachers **choose** to create and work at schools

Kris Coffield (808) 679-7454 imuaalliance@gmail.com

where they directly shape the best working and learning environment for their students and themselves.

- Accountability: Charter schools are judged on how well they meet the academic, financial, and organizational performance expectations set forth in their charter performance contracts. Additionally, because charter schools are schools of choice, another measure of accountability is student enrollment—if students and their families are unhappy, they can choose to go elsewhere.
- Autonomy: While charter schools must adhere to the same federal laws and regulations and state standards as all other public schools, they have **flexibility with curriculum and direct management of energy and resources**, allowing them to be innovative.

What is clear, even from HSPCSC's description, is that charter schools are designed to advance the "school choice" agenda by providing alternatives to traditional public schools, in which curriculum and resources are managed by governing boards composed of private interests—members of charter school boards, the State Auditor has noted, sometimes violate conflict-of-interest practices by comingling nonprofit and charter school affairs). In contrast, departmental schools are offered little flexibility and are tasked with meeting the needs of every student who walks through their classroom doors.

Thus, providing funds to charter schools to rectify overcrowding sets the precedent that public school concerns can be addressed through the expansion of school choice initiatives, in which there is evidence of financial and ethical impropriety and from which public school resources may be diluted. In our view, passing this bill is akin to supporting a school voucher program, in which school choice is emphasized over support for quality public education. To address overcrowding in our state's public school classrooms, we urge the committee to increase funding for facilities by amending the State Constitution to allow a surcharge to be levied on property taxes for visitor accommodations and residential investment units.

Passing this bill *could* lay the groundwork for additional efforts to privatize public education and definitely creates a negative precedent for how to address capacity concerns in Hawai'i's public school system. Accordingly, we **oppose** this bill.

Sincerely, Kris Coffield Executive Director IMUAlliance



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

> Corey Rosenlee President Justin Hughey Vice President Amy Perruso Secretary-Treasurer

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wilbert Holck Executive Director

RE: HB 2167 - RELATING TO SCHOOLS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2018

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association opposes HB 2167, relating to schools.

Hawai'i's public schools are besieged by overcrowding and declining infrastructure. Our state's school facilities are, on average, over 65-years-old. Yet, at Campbell High School, enrollment stands at 3,049 students, up 15 percent from 2010 and roughly 1,000 more students than in 2005. Campbell was built to serve 1,700 students, meaning that it is operating at 80 percent overcapacity.

Campbell is not the only school facing overcrowding. Numerous schools throughout the state crowd keiki into crumbling buildings, creating classroom experiences that inhibit learning and impede safety. Nonetheless, providing seed money to charter schools is not and should not be the solution to overcrowded classrooms. While we appreciate this bill's attempt to ease school congestion, we note that it would divert resources from traditional public schools. Charter schools and traditional departmental schools do not follow the same educational paradigm. Charter schools are public schools of choice, in which enrollment is opted into by the families of students. Moreover, despite accountability requirements, charter schools are freed from many of the regulations governing traditional public schools.

Overcrowding must be solved by increasing funding for public schools. Given this proposal's depletion of resources for our already underfunded school system, however, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **oppose** this bill.



January 30, 2018

To: Representative Justin Woodson, Chair Representative Sam Kong, Vice Chair

Committee on Education

From: Mandy Finlay, Director of Public Policy

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Re: HB 2167- Relating to Charter Schools

Hawaii State Capitol, Room 309, January 31, 2018, 2:05 PM

On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), we are writing to support HB 2167 – Relating to Charter Schools.

Despite a 160 percent growth in charter school student populations since 2001, these schools remain underfunded. The State has, in the past, provided start-up grants to charter schools, but no longer does so. Instead, these costs must come from the schools' per-pupil allocation, which is still significantly less for charter schools than what is provided to DOE schools. By providing an adequate amount of funding needed for pre-opening charter schools, this bill would allow appropriate and safe facilities to be built or leased for classroom and learning areas. Research shows a significant relationship between the condition of a school's facilities and the performance of its students. All of Hawaii's students deserve the opportunity to succeed.

For these reasons, HCAN respectfully requests that the committee pass this bill.

HCAN is committed to building a unified voice advocating for Hawaii's children by improving their safety, health, and education.

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 2:06:50 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kalima Cayir	Volcano School of Arts & Sciences	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Esteemed Representatives,

I am writing to request your support for HB2167 to provide start-up funding for new charter schools. Hawai'i's children need more diverse and higher quality schools to choose from.

I would like to request that this bill be amended to include funds for expansions of existing schools such as adding a division (e.g. high school, additional site). Existing schools already have the infrastructure in place to successfully expand to another division or location. Replication of innovative practices are likely to be effective if under the leadership of an existing school.

Mahalo for your support.

Kalima Cayir

Lead Learner and Principal of The Volcano School of Arts & Sciences



House Committee on Education

Time: 2:05 p.m.

Date: January 31, 2018

Where: Conference Room 309

TESTIMONY By Kaʻanoʻi Walk Kamehameha Schools

RE: HB 2167, RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS.

E ka Luna Hoʻomalu Woodson, ka Hope Luna Hoʻomalu Kong, a me nā Lālā o ke Kōmike Hoʻonaʻauao o ka Hale o nā Lunamakaʻāinana, aloha! My name is Kaʻanoʻi Walk and I serve as the Senior Policy Analyst of the Kūamahi Community Education Division of Kamehameha Schools.

HB 2167, relating to charter schools appropriates moneys for start-up grants for new pre-opening public charter schools. We are writing in <u>support</u> of this measure.

Kamehameha Schools advocates for and supports the achievement of Hawai'i's Native Hawaiian public school students. As such, we have been a collaborator with the Hawai'i public charter schools for over a decade. Through our work with Hawaiian-focused public charter schools, we hope to significantly impact more children and their families through education. We believe that Hawaiian-focused charter schools provide quality educational choices for all families and ultimately enhance both academic achievement and engagement for students. This bill is a good first step toward achieving necessary and sustainable funding for public charter schools.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an organization striving to advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership. Please advance this measure.

'A'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia. No task is too large when we all work together! Mahalo nui.

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 9:03:39 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jenna Way		Support	No

Comments:

I fully support this bill. It is unfair and utterly ridiculous that DOE schools are provided funds for facilities, student transportation, and meal services that is not available to charter schools.

Why is one public school students entitled to these services while another is denied? Equal funding for all public school students is the only fair distribution of our public funds. Please support this bill.

<u>HB-2167</u> Submitted on: 1/30/2018 9:34:52 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
matthew john schindler		Support	No

Comments:

Charter schools need more infrastructure financial support.

<u>HB-2167</u> Submitted on: 1/30/2018 10:13:30 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing	
Florence James		Support	No	

Comments:

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 11:27:32 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Josiah		Support	No

Comments:

Hello legislatures. I've been in the charter schools for a total of three years now. In my experience not everyone fits in well at a public school. Funding character school in Hawaii could be extremely advantageous to students who need to find a school that teachers in a way which supports their growth as a lifelong learner. At the school I currently attend, Hawaii Technology Academy, we has a system which allows students to be independent and offer more one on one support for students. It has been a really great opportunity for me and for other students here. Public charter schools can offer so much to students which is why it would be great for more to start in the islands.

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 11:28:42 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Chanelle Chin		Support	No

Comments:

Hello Legislators,

Thank you for support for HB 2167. I am a teacher at Hawaii Technology Academy. I've been teaching here for about 3 years. I am truly grateful for the opportunities charter schools give to provide families with alternative education. Students who attend HTA find they are able to thrive as opposed to the overcrowded classrooms and schools we often see on Oahu. Students can have more support by their teachers and administrators and we often are able to help students and their families get the confidence and education they deserve but may not have found at a regular public school.

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 11:28:56 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jill D. Raznov		Support	No

Comments:

I support HB 2167 relating to charter schools. I am a parent of a charter school child (HAAS PCS) and a Governing Board Member for this school. As such, I have experienced first hand the excellent opportunities provided to our keiki (and mine particularly) at Hawaii's charter schools. I am so grateful that HAAS PC is an available educational resource for me and my family in the Puna area of the Big Island. I support the growth and development of charter schools in other areas of the State so as to provuide additional opportunities to other families who are seeking something a bit different than what a traditional DOE school can provide. Therefore, I wholeheartedly support the appropriation of funding for start-up grants for pre-opening public charter schools. Mahalo Nui Loa! - Jill Dana Raznov, Esq.

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 3:06:07 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jane Wells	VSAS	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha!

We are hopeful to expand our campus and facilities at the VSAS Charter. Every since my child has been here, starting in 2010, there has been talk of expansion, and a new campus, and yet every year, our goals fall short. This bill would have such an incredible impact on our students, and their learning environment. Mahalo for considering this bill and VSAS!

<u>HB-2167</u> Submitted on: 1/30/2018 1:52:23 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Terri York		Support	No

Comments:

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 3:00:29 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Hawi Stecher		Support	No

Comments:

Please vote for HB2167. I support funding for starting new charter schools. However, I would like to see HB2167 revised to include expansions of existing charter schools.

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 3:00:44 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

 Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Erica Jensen	Volcano School of Arts & Sciences	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill but would like it to be revised to include expansions to existing schools. For example, I would like it to provide funding for existing Charter Schools, such as ours, to add a high school if it does not already have one.

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 3:00:57 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laura Warner	Volcano School of Arts & Sciences	Support	No

Comments:

This bill please should include expansion of exisiting schools, such as adding funds to support schools expanding to high school, or new needed facilities.

This bill use to include expansion. ... it needs to be revised back to the old bill.

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 3:01:35 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing	
Rebecca Hatch	The Volcano School of Arts & Sciences	Support	No	

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Rebecca Hatch and I am a teacher at The Volcano School of Arts & Sciences.

I support funding for new start-up charter schools. Please add to the bill to include funding for school expansions, such as adding a high school to an existing school.

Mahalo!

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 3:02:45 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	l estitier Position	Present at Hearing
Karen Costales	Volcano School of Arts & Sciences	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha from Big Island! Please revise HB2167 to include money for expansion of already existing, successful public charter school programs. Public Charter Schools are receiving no money in the first place to provide infrastructure! Please help us! We are serving the same children that D.O.E. students are serving! Mahalo! [Remember, you already give \$2,000 les per pupil in the first place without considering that charters don't get money for infrastructure or for growing. Please consider helping the charters.]



Submitted on: 1/30/2018 3:05:06 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Barnard	Volcano School	Support	No

Comments:

RE: HB 2167

Aloha,

I am writing in support of additional funding for start up and the expansion of charter schools to enable communities to better serve the needs of their children. Charter school students are public school children and deserve equitable funding for a learning environment that serves their needs the same as students in DOE schools.

Lisa Barnard

PO Box 253

Volcano, HI 96785

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 3:09:42 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mara Saltzman	Volcano School Teacher	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

Please vote to fund charter school start-ups and expansions. The public charter schools are serving Hawaiian students and the public community as a whole. Charter schools here in Hawaii have a lot to offer the community in terms of community enrichment and there should be help from legislators to expand this public school opportunity to the greater community.

Mara Saltzman

<u>HB-2167</u> Submitted on: 1/30/2018 6:03:59 PM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Maria Kottwitz		Support	No

Comments:





House Committee on Education

Time: 2:05 p.m.

Date: January 31, 2018 Where: Conference Room 309

TESTIMONY By Kaʻanoʻi Walk Kamehameha Schools

RE: **HB 2167,** RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS.

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'A'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia. No task is too large when we all work together! Mahalo nui.

<u>HB-2167</u> Submitted on: 1/31/2018 10:05:00 AM

Testimony for EDN on 1/31/2018 2:05:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
ELIZABETH A HILLER VALENTIN	PROJECT VISION HAWAII	Support	No

Comments: