



STATE OF HAWAI'I
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
February 06, 2024

The Honorable Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Committee on Education
The Honorable Representative Linda Ichiyama, Chair
Representative Committee on Water & Land
Thirty-Second Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Woodson, Representative Ichiyama, and Committee members:

SUBJECT: HB1837 RELATING TO SCHOOL SAFETY

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB1837**, which requires the Department of Education to grant public access to emergency action plans that do not pose a security risk to students, staff, or guests of school campuses. Requires each Department school to have a comprehensive school evacuation communication plan for use during emergencies. Requires the Department of Education to collaborate with the Department of Transportation to assess all Department school campuses to determine if there are sufficient emergency evacuation routes for each campus and report to the Legislature.

The Council recognizes the importance of ensuring school safety and emergency preparedness. This measure demonstrates a commitment to enhancing the overall well-being of students, staff, and guests on school campuses. We specifically want to highlight the provisions on page 4, lines 5-20, which assure that the access and functional needs of individuals with disabilities are taken into consideration. Recognizing and addressing the unique requirements of individuals with disabilities in emergency action plans is a crucial aspect of inclusive and effective preparedness.

In the Council's support for this measure, we defer to the Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) for any substantive comments or amendments. DCAB's expertise in accessibility matters is invaluable in shaping comprehensive and effective legislation that accounts for the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB1837**.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



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

Date: 02/06/2024
Time: 02:00 PM
Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Committee: House Education
House Water & Land

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 1837 RELATING TO SCHOOL SAFETY.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to grant public access to emergency action plans that do not pose a security risk to students, staff, or guests of school campuses. Requires each Department school to have a comprehensive school evacuation communication plan for use during emergencies. Requires the Department of Education to collaborate with the Department of Transportation to assess all Department school campuses to determine if there are sufficient emergency evacuation routes for each campus and report to the Legislature.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) provides comments on HB 1837. While the measure includes initiatives supportive of our goals and objectives, we are concerned about the cost implications generated by this proposal.

The Department is fully aware of emergencies and disasters that can strike anywhere and at any time. Each Department school has a site-specific emergency action plan (EAP). Within each emergency action plan contains procedures and protocols for managing various threats using the four phases of emergency management. Along with managing various threats, the EAP includes a communication section that provides communications guidance for school closures. The Department also has an emergency operation plan which contains procedures, and protocols to assist state-level emergencies and support districts and schools.

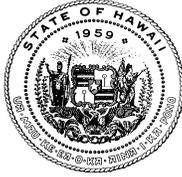
The Department has concerns about providing information regarding the emergency response plans. These plans include sensitive information about emergency procedures including, but not limited to, staff names, contact numbers, and emergency protocols.

Many of the comprehensive evacuation communications plan items listed in the bill already exist. However, language translation requirements are not achievable promptly during immediate, life-threatening situations like a fire, earthquake, tsunami, or active shooter threat. External translation services will take time to coordinate for the 15-plus languages commonly used by families and are not available around the clock and daily.

During emergency events, the Department's Communication Branch personnel will participate as an emergency response team member to represent the Department at the Joint Information Center (JIC). The JIC provides the mechanism to organize, integrate, and coordinate information to ensure timely, accurate, accessible, and consistent messaging across multiple jurisdictions and/or disciplines. The school EAP includes a communication plan and evacuation plan.

Lastly, the Department requests that, should this measure move forward, funding be provided to support activities related to this bill, emergency preparedness, additional personnel, and training and/or conferences.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS

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Testimony COMMENTING on HB1837
RELATING TO SCHOOL SAFETY

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair
House Committee on Education

Representative Linda Ichiyama, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
House Committee on Water & Land

Hearing Date: 2/6/2024

Room Number: 309 & Videoconference

1 **Agency's Position:** The Office of Language Access (OLA) appreciates the intent of this measure
2 and offers the following comments.

3 **Purpose and Justification:** This measure requires the Department of Education to grant public
4 access to emergency action plans that do not pose a security risk to students, staff, or guests of
5 school campuses; requires each Department school to have a comprehensive school evacuation
6 communication plan for use during emergencies; and requires the Department of Education to
7 collaborate with the Department of Transportation to assess all Department school campuses to
8 determine if there are sufficient emergency evacuation routes for each campus and report to the
9 Legislature.

10 OLA appreciates the Legislature's continued commitment to ensuring language access in
11 government programs, services, and activities. This measure addresses the important component
12 of language access needs within our diverse community by including cultural awareness and
13 responsiveness to translation needs within the comprehensive evacuation communication plan.

14 To build on this strong foundation, it may be beneficial to explicitly include both oral
15 interpretation and written translation within the scope of the comprehensive evacuation

1 communication plan. This approach ensures that the plan addresses the full spectrum of
2 communication needs, which can vary significantly among individuals and communities, such as
3 literacy levels in their native languages, preferred modes of communication, and methods of
4 disseminating information. It could also address the immediate needs for language access during
5 an emergency when translation services will take time to coordinate and procure.

6 Therefore, adopting the term "language access needs" could offer a more comprehensive and
7 inclusive framework, while allowing flexibility in the implementation of the plan. This
8 terminology encompasses not only the written translation and oral interpretation aspects but also
9 the broader goal of ensuring that language barriers do not impede access to information and
10 services.

11 **Offered Amendments:** For the aforementioned reasons, OLA respectfully proposes the
12 following amendment:

- 13 • Replace [~~translation needs~~] with language access needs on Page 4, Lines 5-6.

14 Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

Council Chair
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore
Tasha Kama

Councilmembers
Tom Cook
Gabe Johnson
Tamara Paltin
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez
Shane M. Sinenci
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins



Director of Council Services
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COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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February 5, 2024

TO: The Honorable Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Education

The Honorable Representative Linda Ichiyama, Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Water and Land

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alice L. Lee".

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2024; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
HB1837, RELATING TO SCHOOL SAFETY**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure to promote planning for evacuation of public schools in an emergency. I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. This bipartisan proposal is a well-considered recommendation of the Schools Working Group from the House of Representatives' Lahaina Wildfire Interim Working Groups.
2. The Schools Working Group's "Finding 1: School Evacuation Plans" states: "One of the most prominent areas of concern for the Working Group—one shared by West Maui community members—is the adequacy of evacuation plans in place and the need for such plans to be rehearsed . . .".
3. Requiring the Department of Education to collaborate with the Department of Transportation in the creation of individualized school-evacuation plans will ensure efficiency and public safety.

For the foregoing reasons, I **support** this measure.



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Osa Tui, Jr.
President

Logan Okita
Vice President

Lisa Thompson
Secretary-Treasurer

Ann Mahi
Executive Director

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Item: **HB1837 - Relating to School Safety**
Position: **Support**
Hearing: **February 6, 2024, 2:00 p.m., Conference Room 309**
Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Chair Woodson, Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair La Chica, Vice Chair Poepoe, and committee members,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association **supports** HB1837 which requires the Department of Education to grant public access to emergency action plans that do not pose a security risk to students, staff, or guests of school campuses, requires each Department school to have a comprehensive school evacuation communication plan for use during emergencies, and requires the Department of Education to collaborate with the Department of Transportation to assess all Department school campuses to determine if there are sufficient emergency evacuation routes for each campus and report to the Legislature.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Education at one point said to the Board of Education that emergency plans would be shared and then later said they would not. This did not foster trust that HDOE would know what they were doing in that situation. In light of the Maui wildfires, ensuring that easily accessible school emergency procedures to the broader community, including the communication plan, will help foster more trust from the community in preparation for times of crisis.

Law enforcement personnel should also be aware of and consulted on school emergency plans. For example, a recent chemical release near a school should have prompted lockdown procedures that were spelled out in the school's emergency procedures that faculty and staff were trained on. However, law enforcement (unaware of the school emergency plans) instituted a campus evacuation which only further increased possible chemical exposure by students and school staff and faculty.

Multiple evacuation routes are essential, especially if a fire or some other incident prohibits evacuating along what is usually a single practiced evacuation route. Being able to evacuate a campus in an orderly fashion in an emergency necessitates multiple options be practiced when possible.

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

FEBRUARY 6, 2024

HB 1837, RELATING TO SCHOOL SAFETY

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **supports** HB 1837, relating to school safety. Pursuant to the “Education” section of the official Democratic Party of Hawai'i platform, the party believes, “Educational facilities must be maintained, renovated, and built to 21st century innovations so that our students learn in well-designed, safe environments.”

Last year, we witnessed the impact of the climate emergency on our shores. On August 8, 2023, wildfires swept across Maui and killed at least 100 people, making it one of the nation's deadliest natural disasters. The spread of the fires has been attributed to climate change conditions, such as unusually dry landscapes and the confluence of a strong high-pressure system to the north and Hurricane Dora to the south.

The wildfires destroyed over 2,200 structures, including numerous residential buildings, historic landmarks, and school facilities, including King Kamehameha III Elementary School. Though the fires did not occur while students were on campus, **the physical devastation and loss of life resulting from the wildfires reveals the urgency of ensuring that each of the state's public schools are prepared to manage future emergencies.** In September 2023, a report from the United States

Department of Commerce estimated the total economic damage of the wildfires to be roughly \$5.5 billion.

Accordingly, we must do all we can to prevent tragedies like this from occurring again on our shores, including by requiring schools to create and publicize emergency response plans for natural disasters. The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency released an updated State Hazard Mitigation Plan last November, in which the state's wildfire risk level soared 74 percent to 6.6 from its previous level of 3.8 in the 2018 draft of the report.

The updated hazard mitigation plan contains statistics on how many people by county are at risk from wildfire hazards. For Honolulu, 427,293 people could potentially be affected by wildfires, which was listed as the highest risk with a risk factor of 5.7. Maui County also has wildfires as its highest emergency risk with a score of 5.8 and 81,424 people at risk. On Kaua'i, wildfires carry a 5.6 risk level and threaten 27,604 people. Hawai'i Island has a wildfire risk score of 4.6 and 32,080 people at risk.

Proactive planning is essential in implementing school safety protocols. Now, more than ever, we should invest in measures that protect our schools and our children from further emergencies.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kris Coffield

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Abby Simmons

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HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer
Greg Tjapkes, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive
Director

Network Membership

*Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i
Big Island Substance Abuse
Council*

*Bobby Benson Center
Child and Family Service
Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i
Collins Consulting, LLC
Domestic Violence Action Center
EPIC `Ohana, Inc.*

*Family Programs Hawai`i
Family Support Hawai`i
Friends of the Children's Justice
Center of Maui*

*Get Ready Hawai`i
Hale Kipa, Inc.
Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc.
Hawai`i Children's Action
Network*

*Hawai`i Health & Harm
Reduction Center
Hawaii Island Community'
Health Center*

*Ho`ola Na Pua
Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i
Ka Hale Pomaika`i
Kahi Mohala
Kokua Kalihii Valley
Kaua`i Planning and Action
Alliance*

*Maui Youth and Family Services
Na Pu`uwai Molokai Native
Hawaiian Health Care
Systems*

*P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.
Parents and Children Together
PHOCUSED*

*PFLAG - Kona, Big Island
Planned Parenthood of the
Great Northwest, Hawaii
Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana*

*Residential Youth Services
& Empowerment (RYSE)*

*Salvation Army Family
Intervention Services*

*Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Susannah Wesley Community
Center*

The Catalyst Group

February 3, 2024

Representative Justin Woodson, Chair
And members of the Committee on Education

Representative Linda Ichiyama, Chari
And members of the Committee on Water and Land

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1837 RELATING TO SCHOOL SAFETY

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN) supports HB 1837 Relating to School Safety.

In October 2023, 160 youth and young adults gathered at the State Capitol for the 30th annual Hawaii Children and Youth Summit. The answered the question, "What does our legislature need to do to make Hawai`i a better place to live, learn, and work?"

Among their 12 recommendations for legislative action was:

The State should update the current disaster protocols implemented in schools. To require at least 2 lockdown drills per quarter. And make sure school facilities such as roads are prepared for evacuation.

On behalf of the young people who recognize the need for disaster preparedness in their schools, we urge your support for this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark
Executive Director, Hawaii Youth Services Network
Hawaii Children and Youth Summit Legislative Liaison

HB-1837

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 1:22:58 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Paltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Since the 8/8/23 maui wildfires, there were two instances where a fire started near to Lahainaluna High School and also near to the emergency evacuation route that the State cut through Kamehameha School land. While no students were injured and the fire was quickly extinguished, the situation itself showed that we as a community are not prepared for a windy day and a fast moving fire near our 3 public schools on Lahainaluna road and I suspect the same goes for the majority of schools in our state and so I think this is an important bill to provide transparency and help parents to know what to do in the event of an emergency to the extent that it does not jeopardize student safety.

Mahalo for your commitment to our students,

Tamara Paltin



HOUSE BILL 1837, RELATING TO SCHOOL SAFETY

FEBRUARY 6, 2024 · EDN HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** HB 1837, relating to school safety, which requires the Department of Education to grant public access to emergency action plans that do not pose a security risk to students, staff, or guests of school campuses; requires each department school to have a comprehensive school evacuation communication plan for use during emergencies; and requires the Department of Education to collaborate with the Department of Transportation to assess all Department school campuses to determine if there are sufficient emergency evacuation routes for each campus and report to the legislature.

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schools are prepared to manage future emergencies. In September 2023, a report from the United States Department of Commerce estimated the total economic damage of the wildfires to be roughly \$5.5 billion.

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Kris Coffield · Chairperson, DPH Education Caucus · (808) 679-7454 · kriscoffield@gmail.com