DAVID Y. IGE GOVERNOR



DR. CHRISTINA M. KISHIMOTO SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAI'I DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION P.O. BOX 2360 HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96804

> Date: 02/04/2021 Time: 02:00 PM Location: Via Videoconference Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

- Title of Bill:HB 0690 PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE X,<br/>SECTION 1, OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF<br/>HAWAII TO REQUIRE THAT THE STATEWIDE PUBLIC<br/>SCHOOL SYSTEM BE THOROUGH AND EFFICIENT.
- **Purpose of Bill:** Proposes an amendment to article X, section 1, of the Hawaii State Constitution to require that the statewide public school system be thorough and efficient.

# **Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of HB 690. The Department supports efforts to ensure a more thorough and efficient public statewide K-12 education system and highlights the imperative need in devoting adequate resources to safeguard and enable the effective implementation of the constitutional mandates of Title X, section 1.

The National Conference of State Legislatures references scholarly research that categorizes each of the 50 state constitutions based on the strength of its provisions establishing a fiduciary duty to provide public education. Hawaii's constitution ranks in the weakest category. The Department believes adding the words "thorough" and "efficient" modestly strengthens the language of Title X, section 1 regarding public education.

The Department works to ensure a vibrant K-12 public education system that enables the fulfillment of educational goals and aspirations far beyond a student's successful completion of secondary education requirements. While the proposed adjustments to Title X, section 1 of Hawaii's constitution aims to strengthen the state's commitment to

this goal, the Department implores the legislature to simultaneously focus on pursuing actions that promote stability and predictability of K-12 education revenues. This ensures the uninterrupted equitable distribution of educational resources for all public school students in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure and for your continued support of Hawaii's public schools.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.





Corey Rosenlee President Osa Tui Jr. Vice President Logan Okita Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck Executive Director

#### TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

# RE: HB 690 PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE X, SECTION 1, OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF HAWAII TO REQUIRE THAT THE STATEWIDE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM BE THOROUGH AND EFFICIENT.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2021

# COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association <u>strongly supports HB 690</u>, proposing amending the state constitution. This bill proposes an amendment to article X, section 1, of the Hawaii State Constitution to require that the statewide public school system be thorough and efficient. This wording would make our state constitution stronger specifically by not just supporting public education, but ensuring it is also "thorough and efficient."

The way Hawaii funds public education is systemically broken. Hawaii is the only state where the counties contribute no revenue to fund education, yet all of the property taxes are given to the counties. This systemic failure means that Hawaii spends the lowest percentage of state and county funds towards education in the country. As a result, Hawaii has the 45th lowest per-pupil spending and the lowest teacher salaries in the nation, when adjusted for cost of living.

There is a clear link between these key statistics: Hawaii has more than 1,000 teacher vacancies each school year and our most recent 8<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP scores rank 41<sup>st</sup> in the nation while our state ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation in completion rates for 9<sup>th</sup> graders going to college.

Other states have remedies in the courts available when their education systems systemically deny a quality public education. The vast majority of states, 38 out of 50, have language in their constitutions protecting education. But Hawaii does not. Not only does Hawaii fail to have proper systems in place to fund education, it also doesn't have the constitutional remedy to correct the systemic problem.



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

> Corey Rosenlee President Osa Tui Jr. Vice President Logan Okita Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck Executive Director

This constitutional amendment adds the words "thorough and efficient" into Hawaii's state constitution referring to public education. That is the same important combination of words found in the Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia state constitutions. The state constitutions of Colorado and Idaho guarantee "thorough" education, while "efficient" educations are enshrined in the Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky and Texas state constitutions.

Just a little over a decade ago, Hawaii experienced an economic decline that resulted in cuts to education funding. Currently, even with the restoration of some of the initially planned budget cuts, Hawaii could still lay off 1,000 DOE employees, including 700 teachers and may also reduce employees' salaries. Our educators and our schools are trying to recover from the economic recession and the budget cuts of 2009. Making this important change in our constitution will help avoid this kind of damage to our education system in the decades to come.

Hawaii's leaders often say that our keiki are our future and that we have to protect education at all costs. This bill will give the people of Hawaii the opportunity to vote to enshrine that value into our state constitution, to ensure that no matter what crises happen, we always put our keiki first.



# HOUSE BILL 690, PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE X, SECTION 1, OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF HAWAII TO REQUIRE THAT THE STATEWIDE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM BE THOROUGH AND EFFICIENT

FEBRUARY 4, 2021 · HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE · CHAIR REP. JUSTIN H. WOODSON

**POSITION:** Strong support.

**RATIONALE:** The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus strongly supports HB 690, which proposes an amendment to Article X, Section 1, of the Hawai'i State Constitution to require that the statewide public school system be thorough and efficient.

Currently, our State Constitution demands the establishment of a public education system, but is silent about the quality of the schools provided. Requiring our school system to be "thorough and efficient" would bring Hawai'i into alignment with states that have determined, through similar constitutional language, that schools must be well-funded, staffed by quality teachers, housed in modern facilities, and deliver well-rounded learning opportunities. <u>Today, 38 state constitutions</u> <u>contain language describing educational quality, of which 11 use the phrase "thorough and efficient" to describe public education</u>–Colorado, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and West Virginia.

We desperately need to amend our State Constitution to guarantee ample learning opportunities for our keiki. As it has for years, the Aloha State is suffering from a chronic teacher shortage crisis,

which could be exacerbated by proposed cuts to the Hawai'i Department of Education's budget amounting to 15 to 21 percent. Additionally, we continue to lose approximately 50 percent of new hires after five years-the number of teachers exiting the teaching profession has spiked by over 80 percent since 2010.

Low teacher pay is the primary driver of teacher turnover. Numerous studies, including those performed by WalletHub.com and EdBuild, have found that Hawai'i's teacher pay ranks last in the nation when adjusted for cost of living. Moreover, a 2019 Economic Policy Institute analysis found that in our state, teachers earn 19.1 percent lower pay compared with other college graduates. Research also shows that as teacher pay increases, so, too, does student achievement. A Stanford University analysis found that raising teacher wages by 10 percent reduces high school dropout rates by 3 to 4 percent. Similarly, a Florida study showed that pay raises reduced teacher attrition by as much as 25 percent for hard-to-fill subject areas, with children's learning growth gaining from more exposure to experienced educators. To deliver the schools our keiki deserve, we must raise the revenue necessary to pay teachers what they're worth.

Furthermore, according to the National School Supply and Equipment Association, public school teachers annually spend \$1.6 billion of their discretionary income on supplementary school supplies and instructional materials, showing the lack of adequate resources in Hawai'i's schools. On average, teachers surveyed spent a total of \$485 on school supplies and instructional materials, with more than 10 percent spending over \$1,000 of personal income each school year to educate their keiki. That trend is, if anything, worse in Hawai'i. Pay cuts, rising health care costs, adjusted insurance co-pays, and the loss of the state's \$1,690-per-special-education-teacher classroom supply fund have all aggravated the financial burden borne by teachers' pocketbooks. In a recent survey conducted by HSTA, 47 percent of respondents cited personal expenditures between \$250 and \$500 each year on classroom supplies, with many claiming expenditures in excess of \$1,000.

Budget cuts and an overemphasis on standardized testing have crippled the DOE in recent years, leading to reconsideration of whether or not to continue successful learning programs. Arts, Hawaiian cultural, career and technical, foreign language, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century elective programs

have been slashed to maintain an unsustainable testing regime. Unfortunately, when our state's education budget fails to keep pace with inflation, successful learning centers and categorical programming get placed on the chopping block, while the DOE's priorities shift from classroom support to programmatic savings. Put simply, when we fail to adequately fund our schools, the DOE must spend more time accounting for basic programs, crowding out concerns about the efficient allocation of funds for individual teacher and student needs, like classroom resources.



FY08-18 Actual Collections per Department of Taxation; FY19 and FY20 based on Council on Rvenues May 23, 2019 projection.

Finally, we note that our state's public schools are over 60 years old on average and the department's repair and maintenance backlog stood at \$868 million as of January 2019. Providing students and teachers with a quality and safe learning environment is essential to increasing student achievement. Decaying classrooms are not conducive to providing an education that

matches the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy or civic society, especially when they are not only under-resourced, but drifting steadily toward uninhabitability.



While this measure does not convey a mechanism for increasing financial support for education, it would allow voters to decide whether or not our schools should be given more than lip service as a constitutional priority for our state. Following the amendment's passage, we, as a community, would be empowered to decide how to fulfill our obligation to deliver the schools our keiki deserve and enable our children to reach for the stars.

We cannot give up the quest for a fully-funded school system. Our keiki's and our community's future depends on our resolve.

Kris Coffield · Chairperson, Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus · (808) 679-7454 · kriscoffield@gmail.com

#### HB-690 Submitted on: 2/3/2021 9:45:19 AM Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Justin Hughey	Democratic Party of Hawaii, State Central Committee, Education Caucus Rep.	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson and member of the House Committee on Education,

# Please vote yet on House Bill 690.

As stated in the book Hawaii Pono, our public education system has been the same since 1911: meager funding, too few teachers and dilapidated building.

King Kamehameha III said, "Chiefs and people, give ear to my remarks! My kingdom shall be a kingdom of learning." He believed that education was very important in that it would prepare his people for the changes taking place in Hawai'i. Unfortunately, his vision has diminished, as Department of Education statistics reveal that:

- Native Hawaiian public school students are more likely to have inexperienced, unqualified and out-of-field teacher.
- Hawaii is 48th out of 52 in the nation for 8th grade NAEP reading scores.
- Only 14 percent of Native Hawaiians complete post-secondary education/training.

Why is it that Hawaii's public education spending, as a share of combined state and local government spending, is the lowest in the country? The big five plantation owners created an unequal educational system by design. They sent their kids to private schools and never wanted the plantation workers kids to receive anything more than a fourth grade education. It is my opinion that over the decades, most of our elected officials perpetuated the system, because the vast majority sent their kids to private school.

My first wish is that we end meager funding. On the mainland, a good education is based on your zip code. Rich districts with high property taxes have the best schools. Our weighted student formula is a great idea for equity but it is not funded properly. If we fund our public education appropriately by passing the constitutional amendment, having every school in the state funded adequately and equally would establish the most progressive statewide public educational system in the country. My second wish is that we put an end to the teacher shortage. We have some great teachers on Maui, like Pu'u Kukui Elementary School Curriculum Coordinator Eliza Akana Yoshida who won the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching in 2016. Unfortunately, every child does not have a great teacher, or even a certified teacher. We have started the last two schools years with upwards of 1,600 teacher vacancies. My principal always tells me that he is only as good as the list of teachers he can hire from. Sometimes the list is blank. Did you know many of those openings are filled with substitutes or emergency hires with only a high school diploma?

My third wish is that we put an end to dilapidated school buildings. I teach at King Kamehameha III Elementary, where ten years ago, the ceiling had holes in it. The students were getting rained on in the class. Soaked ceiling tiles were actually falling on the kids. I wrote a letter to the editor about it to The Maui News, calling out former governor Linda Lingle for not releasing education funding approved by the Legislature. As a result, new roofing was installed six months later.

King Kamehameha III's Kingdom of Learning will never be established without amending the constitution to show we value our keiki.

# Please vote yet on House Bill 690.

Stay Safe, Justin Hughey 37 Poniu Circle Wailuku Hi 96793 Third Grade Teacher King Kamehameha III Elementary

Democratic Party of Hawaii, State Central Committee, Education Caucus Rep.

February 4, 2021 2 pm

House Committee on Education Via Videoconference State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street

<u>Re: HB690 – Proposing an Amendment to the Hawaii Constitution to Require the Statewide Public</u> <u>School System to be Thorough and Efficient</u>

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice-Chair Kapela, and members of the House Committee on Education:

We **<u>SUPPORT</u>** the intent of HB690. The bill's purpose is to propose an amendment to article X, section 1, the Hawaii State Constitution to require that the statewide public school system be thorough and efficient.

This bill would help clarify the quality of education that the State of Hawaii would be obligated to provide. The State constitution currently does not specify the quality of education that needs to be provided to our keiki. By enshrining the quality of education in the State's constitution as "thorough" and "efficient" our State would have a clear standard by which we can collectively aim and hold each other accountable to. We support the continued conversation on how we can ensure the highest possible quality education for our keiki and support the intent of a public school system that is both "thorough" and "efficient."

Sincerely,

T. Scare ann

T. George Paris' Managing Director

TGP: MP



# <u>HB-690</u> Submitted on: 2/3/2021 4:18:25 PM Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Deborah Bond-Upson	Parents for Public Schools of Hawaiâ€~ĭ	Support	No

# Comments:

Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i asks for your support of HB 690, which proposes an amendment to Article X, Section 1, of the Hawai'i State Constitution to require that the statewide public school system be thorough and efficient.

Though other states have remedies in the courts available when their education systems systemically deny a quality public education. The vast majority of states, 46 out of 50, have language in their constitutions protecting education. But Hawaii does not. Not only does Hawaii not have proper systems in place to fund education, it also lacks the constitutional remedy to correct the systemic problem.

Our State Constitution demands the establishment of a public education system, but is silent about the quality of the schools provided. Requiring our school system to be "thorough and efficient" would bring Hawai'i into alignment with states that have determined, through similar constitutional language, that schools must be well-funded, staffed with quality teachers, housed in modern facilities, and offer a well-rounded learning experience to all students.

We must achieve "thorough and efficient" education in Hawai'i to nurture the gifts of our students, spark development of new economic opportunities, develop and support a workforce to attract industry, and to enrich all learners to achieve happiness and livelihood here. Please help to bring this education progress to reality with Constitutional Amendment HB 690.

Mahalo,

Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i

#### <u>HB-690</u> Submitted on: 2/2/2021 2:39:03 PM Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carlos A. Santana	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please pass HB 690, which proposes an amendment to Article X, Section 1, of the Hawai'i State Constitution to require that the statewide public school system be thorough and efficient. Currently, our State Constitution demands the establishment of a public education system, but is silent about the quality of the schools provided. Requiring our school system to be "thorough and efficient" would bring Hawai'i into alignment with states that have determined, through similar constitutional language, that schools must be well-funded, staffed with quality teachers, housed in modern facilities, and offer a well-rounded learning experience to all students.

# <u>HB-690</u> Submitted on: 2/2/2021 3:51:51 PM Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Will Caron	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please pass HB690, which proposes an amendment to Article X, Section 1, of the Hawai'i State Constitution to require that the statewide public school system be thorough and efficient. Currently, our State Constitution demands the establishment of a public education system, but is silent about the quality of the schools provided. Requiring our school system to be "thorough and efficient" would bring Hawai'i into alignment with states that have determined, through similar constitutional language, that schools must be well-funded, staffed with quality teachers, housed in modern facilities, and offer a well-rounded learning experience to all students.

Chair Justin Woodson Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela

**House Committee on Education** 

Thursday, February 4, 2021 2:00 PM

#### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB690 PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE X, SECTION 1, OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF HAWAII TO REQUIRE THAT THE STATEWIDE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM BE THOROUGH AND EFFICIENT.

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, Members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Jun Shin, I am a Junior at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and currently serve as an at-large board member for the Young Progressives Demanding Action. I am testifying today as an <u>individual</u> in **SUPPORT** of **HB690**.

Article XI, Section 1 made the creation of a statewide public education system a part of our State Constitution. It is a very good thing to have a right to a public education set in stone like our constitution does, but the language can always be improved. What this constitutional amendment would do is require that the statewide public school system be thorough and efficient.

This amendment is important because our constitution currently does not include language regarding the quality of the schools provided under the public education system. Including the words "thorough and efficient" will ensure that Hawai'i's constitution is aligned with constitutions in other states, where similar language determined that schools must be well-funded, staffed with quality teachers, housed in modern facilities, and offer a well-rounded learning experience to all students.

With this new language, students, parents, teachers, and concerned community members will be able to engage decision makers with one more tool that can be used to create the schools that all our keikis deserve. Speaking as a graduate of the private school system, I am compelled to stand with current and future public school students because all of us have a right to a great education and all its benefits. By extension, teachers, cafeteria workers, janitors, etc who keep the school running, even during this global pandemic, deserve wages and benefits that they can actually survive on. I **SUPPORT HB690** and request for you to pass this bill out of your committee.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin, 1561 Kanunu Street Honolulu, HI 96814 Cell: 808-255-6663 Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

# <u>HB-690</u> Submitted on: 2/3/2021 8:59:09 AM Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Beatrice DeRego	Individual	Support	No

# Comments:

Please pass HB 690, which proposes an amendment to Article X, Section 1, of the Hawai'i State Constitution to require that the statewide public school system be thorough and efficient. Currently, our State Constitution demands the establishment of a public education system, but is silent about the quality of the schools provided. Requiring our school system to be "thorough and efficient" would bring Hawai'i into alignment with states that have determined, through similar constitutional language, that schools must be well-funded, staffed with quality teachers, housed in modern facilities, and offer a well-rounded learning experience to all students.

As a teacher in Hawaii in a rural school with half of our population subsidized for lack of income, I have witnessed first hand the inequities in our current financial allocations to education. Qualified teachers, appropriate and up-to-date resources, opportunities for future success are all at a shortage in too many of our schools, especially those not linked to private partnerships in Honolulu. ALL our keiki deserve an equal chance to develop their potential to be future leaders and problem solvers for Hawaii. Please give them the chance to shine; there are many more bright lights than the DOE would have you believe!

#### <u>HB-690</u> Submitted on: 2/3/2021 11:33:18 AM Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	<b>Testifier Position</b>	Present at Hearing
cheryl B.	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Comments. OF course, we want it to be thorough and efficient.. but it's a bureacracy. How will the legislature measure and will funds be given to support? We would like the DOE to also follow policies and procedures of the state and BOE, again, who checks to make sure? Examples: Acellus continues to be used and Hawaiian language and culture are not part of every day life in all schools for all children. SO, in theory, yes.. on this bill but in practicality? hmmm?



# INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION LOCAL OFFICE • 451 ATKINSON DRIVE • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814 • PHONE 949-4161

HAWAII DIVISION: 100 West Lanikaula Street, Hilo, Hawaii 96720 • OAHU DIVISION: 451 Atkinson Drive, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814 MAUI COUNTY DIVISION: 896 Lower Main Street, Wailuku, Hawaii 96793 • KAUAI DIVISION: 4154 Hardy Street, Lihue, Hawaii 96766 HAWAII LONGSHORE DIVISION: 451 Atkinson Drive, Hanolulu, Hawaii 96814

# **LOCAL 142**

The Thirty-First Legislature Regular Session of 2021

THE HOUSE Committee on Education Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair State Capitol, Videoconference Thursday, February 4, 2021; 2:00 p.m.

#### STATEMENTOF THE ILWU LOCAL 142 ON H.B. 690 PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE X, SECTION 1, OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF HAWAII TO REQUIRE THAT THE STATEWIDE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM BE THOROUGH AND EFFICIENT.

The ILWU Local 142 <u>supports</u> H.B. 690, which proposes an amendment to article X, section 1, of the Hawaii State Constitution to require that the statewide public school system be thorough and efficient.

The ILWU Local 142 strongly believes in quality public schools and a quality public education system. All Hawaii residents deserve a public school system that will nourish and educate our children for success. H.B. 690 will help address our problems and potentially lead to a better school system.

We recommend passage of H.B. 690. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



### <u>HB-690</u> Submitted on: 2/3/2021 7:50:37 PM Testimony for EDN on 2/4/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mireille Ellsworth	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and House Education Committee,

My name is Mireille Ellsworth, a veteran public education teacher in Hilo. Adding descriptors into our state constitution is a critical step to improve the quality of education keiki throughout these islands receive. It is shameful that the most influential document in this state government does not specify the kind of education that our keiki deserve. The lack of accountability is rampant in the system when it comes to the design and delivery of education in our public schools. Although I enjoy the flexibility that allows me to make decisions as to how to teach my students, because of our critical teacher shortage, there are situations in schools that do not make sure that our students get the best opportunities to learn that our modern age has to offer. This cost-free bill should pass this session, and I would be appalled if anyone would oppose it.

Let's move this bill all the way and pass it!

Mahalo,

Mireille Ellsworth,

Classroom Teacher since 2004