



Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

Committee on Finance

Date Time: Friday, February 23, 2024, 1:00PM
Location: Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Measure HB2082 RELATING TO BUS SCHOOL SERVICE

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports HB2082.**

There is a nationwide school bus driver shortage affecting Hawaii. While the department of education contracts school bus services to various contractors on multiple islands, driver shortages have resulted in the cancellation, temporary suspension, and consolidation of bus routes. The legislature also finds that the school bus driver shortage negatively impacts student attendance and causes difficulties for working parents who juggle jobs and school drop-offs. Further evidence finds that the State's severe bus driver shortage is felt disproportionately by families living in rural, underserved areas. The Department of Education is in the process of addressing the cancellation/suspension of bus routes and the purpose of this Bill is to develop comprehensive standards to ensure equitable access, timely communication, and accountability. By setting clear guidelines and expectations, this legislation has the potential to improve the reliability and accessibility of school bus services for all students.

HB2082 aligns with the Vision and Goals of the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP), by promoting an equitable and resilient transportation system.

The OahuMPO is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on the island of Oahu responsible for carrying out a multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a long-range (25-year horizon) metropolitan transportation plan, referred to as the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP) that encourages and promotes a safe and efficient transportation system to serve the mobility needs of people and freight (including walkways, bicycles, and transit), fosters economic growth and development, and takes into consideration resiliency needs, while minimizing fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 CFR 450.300](#)).

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
February 23, 2024

The Honorable Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance
The Thirty-Second Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Kyle Yamashita and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB2082 HD1 RELATING TO SCHOOL BUS SERVICES

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities is in **SUPPORT OF HB2082 HD1**, which establishes comprehensive standards for the department of education related to school bus services to ensure equitable access, timely communication, and accountability. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Functioning school bus systems are essential for individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) in Hawaii. Many individuals with DD in our community rely on school buses as a primary mode of transportation to access educational opportunities, social activities, and essential services. A reliable and accessible school bus service ensures equitable access to education and fosters independence for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The testimony provided highlights the importance of addressing transportation challenges faced by students, particularly those with developmental disabilities. While efforts to address the shortage of bus drivers, such as hiring external providers like Roberts Kauai, have helped mitigate the problem, there are still instances where students face barriers to accessing school bus services. For example, some middle school students continue to congregate at local parks instead of taking the bus home, potentially due to transportation limitations.

HB2082 HD1 seeks to establish comprehensive standards for school bus services to ensure reasonable accommodation, equitable access, timely communication, and accountability. By setting clear guidelines and expectations, this legislation has the potential to improve the reliability and accessibility of school bus services for all students, including those with developmental disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB2082 HD1**.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI
SUPERINTENDENT

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

Date: 02/23/2024

Time: 01:00 PM

Location: 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Finance

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 2082, HD1 RELATING TO SCHOOL BUS SERVICES.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes comprehensive standards for the department of education related to school bus services to ensure equitable access, timely communication, and accountability. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 2082, HD 1.

The Department is appreciative of the amendments made to this bill. It has been the Department's practice to conduct equity assessments prior to scheduled service reductions and the Department will continue with this practice. The Department also supports timely notification to affected families of any changes in bus service, as well as ensuring that the public is aware of the Department's appeals process. While the Department communicates with families when changes to bus routes are being made, we are open to further development of a formalized protocol to ensure communication to appropriate parties.

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



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TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Item: **HB2082 HD1 - Relating to school bus services**
Position: **Support**
Hearing: **February 23, 2024, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room 308**
Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association **supports** HB2082 HD1 which establishes comprehensive standards for the department of education related to school bus services to ensure equitable access, timely communication, and accountability.

One of the most important ways students can be successful in class is for them to actually be in class. When transportation fiascoes prevent students from making it to school, something is fundamentally wrong with our school system. Oftentimes, the most vulnerable students are left behind without any ability to get to school without transportation options. These barriers compound themselves when students are repeatedly deprived of the opportunity for success through no fault of their own. If we are truly concerned about reducing chronic absenteeism in our school, we need to do more to get and keep students in their seats and ready to learn.

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



HAWAI'I APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony for Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB2082 HD1 - Relating to Student Transportation
House Committee on Finance
February 23rd, 2024

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the committee,
Mahalo for the opportunity to express **STRONG SUPPORT for HB2082** which establishes comprehensive standards for the Department of Education (DOE) related to school bus services.

This testimony is being submitted on behalf of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice. Our organization works to build a Hawai'i where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. Affordable, accessible, and safe transportation is crucial for fostering economic equality as it enables individuals of all backgrounds to access employment opportunities, education, and essential services.

As the DOE seeks to restore school bus services, it is crucial that equity guides this process. While some students may have caregivers who can drop them off at school via personal vehicles, this is not an option for many of our students. It has been well-documented that limited school transportation options disproportionately impacts students living in isolated rural locations, families who do not own a personal vehicle, families with special needs and differently-abled children, and single parent families. These populations should be prioritized as school bus services are restored.

HB2082 represents a vital step to ensure reasonable accommodation, equitable access, timely communication, and accountability for student transportation services in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Abbey Seitz

Abbey Seitz

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Director of Transportation Equity

HB-2082-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 8:34:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rayna Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the committee.

I am in support of HB2082.

I have grandchildren who attend Aiea Elementary School and they both walk to and from school daily because there's only 1 bus that's provided for the community that we live in.

It can be dangerous because they have to walk along Kamehameha Highway which is busy during the day and the crime rate in the area has risen within the last couple of months. Also once the stadium goes under construction, the overpass that connects the stadium to the elementary school will be closed and the children will be forced to either cross the busy freeway or use the bridge to get to school.

It was also brought to my attention that certain schools on the island have a "special bus" which is a city bus that provides them transportation to and from school. I think it's unfair as it only provides transportation to certain areas.

I hope your committee thinks about our children's safety and can come up with a solution to help solve this problem.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and for allowing me to testify.

HB-2082-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 9:02:44 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Marie Lopez	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will destroy Maui's economy not only affecting the STR owners but workers. STR owners will be forced to sell. There will be less jobs so residents will be forced to sell. Property values will plummet. Who will pay your taxes then. STRs have paid these taxes and supported Maui's economy as well as the tourists that bring income to almost every single household in one way or another. Businesses will close down. Many have already decided not to rebuild and have left island. We understand an additional contribution and thought it would be higher taxes and a 25.00 fee per reservation. We will lose tourists. This additional tax and fees will drive them away. We no longer qualify for unemployment insurance. More people will be forced to go on welfare which will cost the state more money. Homeowners won't qualify for welfare assistance because they have assets and will not be able to pay their mortgages. Again, forced to se.. This is too high, too much and unfair. If money is all you are thinking about then think of what the state will be losing in tax revenue. They will not be gaining!

HB-2082-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 11:15:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Best	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Revenue must prioritize natural resource management and protection. At this critical time of damaging climate change, which I see from my backyard in Maalaea, we cannot put off doing whatever possible to stave off its eff. Mahalo for supporting this bill.

Bobbie Best in Wailuku

HB-2082-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 11:50:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sonia Vaa	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My Name is Sonia Vaa. I am writing to you with my concern for the shortage of school buses. Due to the super shortage of school buses I see kids walking home from Aiea Elementary to the Hālawā housing/ Makalapa Area. Some of them as young as kindergarten. I see the kids being kids chasing each other some running in the road and my stomach just turns. They are walking near one of the busiest roads on Oahu. If the stadium bridge is not open guess what! They have to cross a road where cars are coming full speed off the freeway. When the bridge is open they still have to walk along side speeding cars and busy busy streets. The safety of our kids is at risk because the state cannot provide the kids with a safe ride home. But yet in the Hawaii Kai ,kapolei , and some other areas areas have such a thing a school specials where the city buses come and just do special school duties to take those kids home. Why can't Aiea? Can we work together to keep our keiki safe? Another thing that gives us anxiety when it's time to do a application , super stressful time for parents & kids its like waiting to see if you hit the lottery because some kids will make the cut and can get on the bus and the rest have to walk and hopefully catch a ride.

A lot of the parents don't have ways to drop off their kids and the bus is the only outlet for the kids. Where is the fairness in this? Aiea Elementary has only one school bus 1! That's insane, with the amount of keiki! please consider adding more buses keep our keiki safe. We do not want to have another kid getting hurt, ran over and seriously injured! It is all of our job to keep the keiki safe! Like they safe it takes a village to raise a kid! That's right we are the village the people of hawaii! There is no place like it so let's put the Keiki and the kids education on top!
Mahalo Sonia Vaa

Aloha,

My Name is Sonia Vaa. I am writing to you with my concern for the shortage of school buses. Due to the super shortage of school buses I see kids walking home from Aiea Elementary to the Hālawā housing/ Makalapa Area. Some of them as young as kindergarten. I see the kids being kids chasing each other some running in the road and my stomach just turns. They are walking near one of the busiest roads on Oahu. If the stadium bridge is not open guess what ? They have to cross a road where cars are coming full speed off the freeway. When the bridge is open they still have to walk along side speeding cars and busy busy streets. The safety of our kids is at risk because the state cannot provide the kids with a safe ride home. But yet in the Hawaii Kai ,kapolei, and some other areas areas have such a thing a school specials where the city buses

come and just do special school duties to take those kids home. Why can't Aiea? Can we work together to keep our keiki safe? Every quarter we get anxiety and I speak for a lot of us! when it's time to do a application, super stressful time for parents & kids its like waiting to see if you hit the lottery because some kids will make the cut and can get on the bus and the rest have to walk and or hopefully catch a ride.

A lot of the parents don't have ways to drop off their kids and the bus is the only outlet for the kids. Where is the fairness in this? Aiea Elementary has only one school bus one! That's insane! with the amount of keiki! please consider adding more buses keep our keiki safe. We do not want to have another kid getting hurt, ran over and seriously injured! It is all of our job to keep the keiki safe! Like they say it takes a village to raise a kid! That's right we are the village the people of hawaii! There is no place like it so let's put the Keiki and the kids education on top! Mahalo
Sonia Vaa