

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:** 03/20/2024

**Time:** 03:01 PM

**Location:** CR 229 & Videoconference

**Committee:** Senate Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB 0500, HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

**Purpose of Bill:** Appropriates funds to DOE to promote surfing as an interscholastic sport.  
Effective 6/30/3000. (HD1)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully offers comments and concerns.

Since 2005, the Department has developed regulations to implement surfing as a high school sport. In 2016, the Hawaii State Board of Education approved Board Policy 101-11, Surfing, which established surfing as a high school sport.

While the Department appreciates the appropriations to support surfing in high school athletic programs, this would not address the larger risk factors that make surfing difficult for high schools to sanction. These risks include concerns around accessible and safe surfing areas to conduct practices and the inability to control the practice environment. On Oahu, surfing has not been proposed by any Department high school principal, and providing funding, while appreciated, would not alleviate these concerns.

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

**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 5:48:11 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Beth Matsuda	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Hawaii is the birthplace of surfing yet is not an official sport. We currently have 13 schools competing. We have 8 OIA schools to form a league. We also have 5 ILH schools. More schools would join by are discouraged by the coast. We have had strong student and community support. Please pass HB500.

**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 2:54:12 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kylie Sato	Testifying for Leilehua High School- Mules Surf Team	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My name is Kylie and I'm the team captain for Leilehua High School's Mules Surf Team. Since middle school when I was asked what sport I was going to play in high school I always knew I wanted to surf. Surfing is my sport and when I'm in the ocean it takes all my worries away and I have so much fun.

After a lot of hard work and help from my mom, I was able to get our Na Haumana o ke Kai club started to then start our Mules Surf Team. This year has been so amazing and the experience has been more than what I ever expected. I had so much fun with my team even meeting new surfers and my school who now we surf together even outside of school and team meet ups. I also met so much other surfers from other schools whom I seen out in the water but now will say hi and talk story.

Surfing does so much and it's connected to our culture and history. We even do service projects because we promote ocean stewardship. We've started a petition a few days ago and received 64 supporters so far: <https://chng.it/mqb465NFs5>

By passing HB500 HD1 it will really help us cover the bare requirements needed to run our surf teams and the high school surf challenges. It is a step forward in making High School Surfing a recognized sport and for investing in our students and giving them an opportunity to connect their passion.

**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 3:52:47 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Fairchild	Testifying for Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Kidani and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation, I am testifying in strong support of HB500 to appropriate funding to the DOE for interscholastic funding.

Surfing was sanctioned by the Department of Education in 2004 but in 20 years has only been funded by schools in the Maui Interscholastic League after tireless advocacy from the local community. Surfing, the official individual sport of our state, and now an Olympic sport, is associated worldwide with Hawaii. It should be offered - and funded - like other varsity sports such as baseball, football, bowling, air riflery, judo, and Esports! This Hawaiian sport teaches and reinforces water safety and ocean skills, which are vitally necessary in our island state which ranks second in the nation for the rate of drowning among **residents**. Students, teachers, and coaches are struggling to pay for water safety training, competition fees, and basic equipment, and in many schools, these costs are a barrier to entry. Please support our keiki to be able to surf for their schools by allocating funds to surfing.

Mahalo,

Sarah Fairchild

Executive Director

Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation



P. O. Box 6116, Kamuela, HI 96743

March 19, 2024

**Senate Committee on Education**

**Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Committee Members:**

Testimony in Support of  
HB 500 SD1

The purpose of this correspondence is to voice our strong support for HB 500 HD1, which appropriates funds to the DOE to promote surfing as an interscholastic sport.

We believe surfing should receive the same resources and emphasis as other DOE sports such as soccer, baseball, volleyball, football, outrigger canoe racing, golf, including bowling. Funding the DOE to promote and conduct surfing as an interscholastic sport will not only be sea change in Hawaii but will also provide a structured framework providing our youth opportunities in surfing competitions, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Surfing is Hawaii's official individual sport that teaches and reinforces water safety and ocean skills. As a canoe club on the Big Island, many of our paddlers, youth and adults, are also surfers who consistently show remarkable skills under varying ocean conditions.

We strongly support this HB 500 HD1 and urge your committee to pass this bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward T. Teixeira".

EDWARD T. TEIXEIRA  
President



**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 2:06:04 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Desire DeSoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Desiré DeSoto  
84-072 Makau St  
Waianae, HI, 96792  
desiremakaha@gmail.com  
(808) 561-1110

3/18/2024

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB500 HD1, which provides funds to DOE to promote surfing as an interscholastic sport.

Notably, despite the Department of Education sanctioning surfing since 2004, only one out of five local athletic leagues currently sponsor surfing programs. This lack of interscholastic surfing opportunities not only hinders the sport's growth but also limits the potential for aspiring students to pursue competitive surfing at a higher level.

By expanding support for interscholastic surfing programs, we can provide a platform for young and inspired individuals to hone their skills, foster their passion for the sport, and represent Hawai'i with pride on a national and international stage. Investing in surfing at the school level promotes physical activity and healthy competition and instills values of discipline, teamwork, and respect for the ocean.

Please consider the immense value that promoting surfing through educational institutions can bring to our community. Let us work together to uphold and honor the rich heritage and spirit of surfing, a sport so deeply ingrained in the fabric of Hawai'i. Ensuring our youth have the necessary resources and opportunities to excel in surfing is not just about sports development, it's about preserving our unique culture. In these times of unprecedented mental health issues, we need to look to the ocean for healing and cleansing.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your past support for the advancement of surfing programs in our state. Your continued support will be instrumental in shaping the future of surfing in Hawai'i, and we look forward to working with you on this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Desiré DeSoto, PhD  
Waianae Complex School Counselor



**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:26:08 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joslyn Sato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Joslyn Sato and I am a parent of a high school surf team rider and also the parent volunteer surf team manager at Leilehua High School. This year, was our team's first year having a surf team. As the team mom, I have seen the positive impact that a high school surf team has done for the students and their families. There really was no place for my daughter. So with her passion, I assisted her in starting and running the Leilehua High School Mules Surf Team this year. The team has given her and the other team riders an opportunity to connect their passion of surfing (shortboard, longboard, bodyboard) to their school and their community. These students do not have other "sports" interest, and when not at school they are surfing. Not only are the students excited to be part of something representing their school, but their parents have been thankful that their children have an opportunity to be student-athletes. The surf team is not only about the contest, it's instilling ocean stewardship through service projects and educational opportunities about our 'aina, building ocean safety through the Jr Lifeguard program, and connecting with local and national industry businesses for exposure to post-high school career opportunities.

Despite all the challenges of the process and requirements to get a team started and participate in the High School Surf Challenges, the hardest challenge has been finding and covering our season fees. While it is a sanctioned sport, there really is no resources behind it leaving the teams to do it all on their own. And since we are not official "athletic sports" we get zero resources from the school and must find funding all through club donations and fundraisers. This season, I have "donated" several hundred dollars to ensure I have 3 coaches lifeguard trained and to ensure we have items needed for any "practices". As smaller teams, we do not have the reach for high-volume fundraisers. We try to minimize the cost paid by students to ensure financial requirements do not prevent participation and be equitable. Any fundraisers and community donations we get go towards our required season fees. With the lack of funding, not only does it limit opportunities but can also impact safety and success of a program. Safety is #1. If we could have funding committed to the high school surfing program it could ensure safety requirements are funded and met equally across the teams and at the challenges, provide some committed resources towards the sanctioned sport, and also help in offsetting expenses required by each school's team.

By passing HB500 HD1, it helps us to take a huge step forward by showing commitment and support in High School Surfing, which aligns with the DOE's 2023-2029 Vision and Core

Values. By offsetting critical expenses, it allows our teams to build up our high school surf programs. In addition, passing HB500 HD1 is an investment in surfing - our culture, history, lifestyle, and industry. It embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion as surfing fosters both an individual and team aspect that includes boys and girls, and shortboard, longboard, and bodyboard surf styles. It's paying it forward to our future by creating a pipeline of potential future lifeguards and other ocean-related opportunities that support our Hawai'i community. In addition, it's supporting an active lifestyle, supports well-being, and connects to our 'aina now and into the future. The opportunity builds relationships across the schools because if you surf, chances are you will be in the water with students from other schools when not at a competition.

By passing HB500 HD1, you're investing in sustaining the Hawaiian culture, the history & achievements of surfing, a pipeline to ocean related careers critical to our community, a program for ocean stewardship and safety, and a sport that keeps our students active now and for a lifetime. Of all high school sports, Surfing is deeply rooted and connected to our Hawai'i and provides so much benefits for students and our communities that will last a lifetime!

**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2024 10:22:34 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Duane DeSoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in complete support of this bill for surfing in our school systems as more than a club sport. Surfing is healthy, empowering outside of the ocean, and honors a legacy of ocean knowledge that the entire world enjoys thanks to people like Duke Kahanamoku.

**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 7:41:51 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James D Howe Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senator Kidani and Member of the Senator Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to support this measure. Having been involved in ocean sports and Ocean Safety for more than 6 decades I would like to share my perspective on why this measure is so valuable to our community.

There are many things we all learn in school. The most important are the skills that we will need to carry us thru our lives. Reading, writing, and math skills are at the top of the list academically. As we all know it's not just academic skills that are important. How to work with others, overcoming challenges, being a good winner (and a good loser) are also important life skills that we all need. Developing these skills is as important as developing academic skill.

In his book "Sports in America" James Michener identified and celebrated the role that sports plays in so many people's lives. Our educational system routinely provides these sports opportunities.

The Board of Education recognized that in Hawai'i the sport of surfing is interwoven into the cultural and social fabric of our communities. The recognized that thousands of students were participating in surf sports before, during, and after school. They also recognized that surf sports are one of the rare sports that participants can enjoy their entire lives. That a lifetime of benefit would be derived for participants if it was to be incorporated into our High School athletics program.

They passed a measure directing the Department of Education to incorporate surfing into their programs. I was asked to assist DOE in developing the necessary criteria to ensure that coaches and students could engage in surfing sports in a safe and well managed manner. I enlisted the support of Ocean Safety Chief Archie Kalepa from Maui and Chief Kalani Vierra from Kauai. Together with key DOE staff the program was fully developed and implemented. Not initially as a HHSAA sport but as a Club Sport. Within several years the Maui Community was successful in having the Maui Interscholastic League (MIL) accept the sport into its program. This has not been the case on Kauai, Big Island, and on Oahu.

There have been numerous surfing club sports programs developed on the Big Island and Oahu. They have been successful, no student has been injured, and there has not been any litigation filed (to the best of my knowledge) against the State or DOE because of injury.

The major impediment to the continuation and growth of the program has been the costs associated with delivering the program. These costs, in both time and money, were being borne by the volunteer coaches. The Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation was one of several organizations that provided funding support to cover the cost of training and education of the surf coaches via the University of Hawai'i Community College Office of Continuing Education and Training.

Thank you for opportunity to present this testimony today. The request before you is to support the effort to move surfing from a club sport to a Interscholastic Sport. An effort that will bring great benefit to our community and one I fully support.

Jim Howe

Retired Director Honolulu Emergency Services Department, retired Ocean Safety Chief, Ocean Safety expert and lifelong ocean sports participant

**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2024 11:33:41 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bill Lane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB500 to appropriate funds to the DOE to promote surfing as an interscholastic sport. Surfing is Hawaii's official individual sport, and it teaches and reinforces vital water safety and ocean skills. Surfing should receive the same resources as other DOE sports such as football, baseball, air riflery, and bowling, so that we may perpetuate this significant part of Hawaii's culture with our next generation.

**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2024 11:35:17 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dustin Kealoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in firm support of HB500 to appropriate funds to the DOE to promote surfing as an interscholastic sport.

As a former Hawaiian Swimming club and HHSAA ILH swimmer, recent HHSAA ILH assistant swim coach, and current Hawaiian Swimming club swim coach, I firmly believe that introducing surfing to Hawai‘i’s interscholastic athletics can aid in reinforcing significant water and ocean safety skills among Hawai‘i’s youth. According to the State of Hawai‘i Department of Health’s Hawai‘i Injury Prevention Plan 2018-2023, “Drownings are the 5th leading cause of fatal injuries among Hawai‘i residents . . . Hawai‘i had the 2nd highest resident drowning fatality rate among all 50 States from 2013 to 2017 . . . Most (84%) of the fatal drownings in Hawai‘i were in the ocean” (HIPP 13). Therefore, introducing surfing as an interscholastic sport can help to combat and address this issue by providing schools with a space to educate Hawai‘i’s youth on how to stay safe and be aware while in the water.

Furthermore, surfing shares a significant role in the Hawaiian culture. As a prominent traditional practice in Hawai‘i for years, establishing surfing as an interscholastic sport can help to perpetuate this significant part of Hawai‘i’s culture for and within the upcoming generations of Hawai‘i students.

Besides, the Hawai‘i Surfing Association (HSA) already currently hosts interscholastic surfing competitions and championships for O‘ahu-based high schools. Thus, formally recognizing surfing as an HHSAA sport could provide students beyond O‘ahu with the opportunity to compete for their school, as well, and vie for a spot at the National Scholastic Surfing Association (NSSA) Championships (as the HSA currently supports).

For the aforementioned reasons, surfing should receive the same resources that many other Hawai‘i DOE sports (e.g., football, baseball, air riflery, and bowling) currently receive.

**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 9:57:17 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Earl S. Tenn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kakou:

I am in strong support of HB500 appropriating funds to the DOE to promote surfing as an interscholastic sport. Surfing is Hawaii's official individual sport, and it teaches and reinforces water safety and ocean skills. Surfing should receive the same resources as other DOE sports such as football, baseball, air riflery, and bowling, so that we may perpetuate this significant part of Hawaii's culture with our next generation.

Mahalo piha for allowing me to testify.

Earl S. Tenn, Liaison, Nadine Alexander Kahanamoku, (Mrs. Duke Kahanamoku).



**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 7:41:41 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dean Stowell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB500 to appropriate funds to the DOE to promote surfing as an interscholastic sport. Surfing is Hawaii's official individual sport, and it teaches and reinforces vital water safety and ocean skills. Surfing should receive the same resources as other DOE sports such as football, baseball, air riflery, and bowling, so that we may perpetuate this significant part of Hawaii's culture with our next generation.

Growing up on Oahu I was raised in the water. I had the privilege of serving my community as a HFD Rescue Capt. During this time I participated in too many recoveries of local children. Please support our schools and keiki in learning water safety and ocean skills.

Mahalo for your time

Dean Stowell

**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 11:49:45 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cheryl Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. It's a waste and inappropriate use of tax payer money

**HB-500-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 1:07:09 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/20/2024 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Candace Vizcarra	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

DOE's boundary is what is taught in the classroom and has no powers outside of that period!! Surfing is NOT EDUCATION, but recreation...DOE---GET IT RIGHT STOP MESSING WITH GOD'S SYSTEM!!!