



**SB2937 SD1 HD2**  
**RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING**  
House Committee on Finance

March 27, 2024

2:00 p.m.

Conference Room 308

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SB2937 SD1 HD2**, which repeals immediately upon enactment, the restrictions on the laboratory school programs in the college of Hawaiian language at the University of Hilo that could be imposed on July 1, 2026.

The classrooms established by Act 46 (SLH 2020) were envisioned to support the great need for early childhood care and education here in Hawai'i. When OHA sought to create its strategic plan, one critical need our community expressed was the ability to provide high-quality keiki and kūpuna care. The development and continued success of the classrooms not only fulfills the legislature's vision of Act 46 but also supports a crucial need for Native Hawaiian families on Hawai'i Island.

OHA has also greatly appreciated the ways these classrooms have been an opportunity for Hawaiian language-medium opportunities to thrive. For Hawaiians, the life of our language, 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, is tied to the health and well-being of our people and culture. "I ka 'olelo no ke ola, i ka 'olelo no ka make" is a revered 'Ōlelo No'eau or proverb that translates to "Life is in speech/language; death is in speech/language."

Practically speaking, removing the sunset simply allows these classrooms to remain open. However, their importance is greater than this practical implication. OHA believes this measure will provide multiple benefits including addressing the early childhood care and education shortage on Hawai'i Island and supporting the continued revitalization of our language.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of SB2937 SD1 HD2. **We urge this Committee to pass this measure.**



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**Executive Office on Early Learning**  
2759 South King Street, Room C6  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

March 25, 2024

**TO:** Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair  
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

**FROM:** Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director  
Executive Office on Early Learning

**SUBJECT: Measure:** S.B. No. 2937 S.D. 1 H.D. 2 – RELATING TO ACCESS TO  
LEARNING

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support**

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) supports S.B. No. 2937 S.D. 1 H.D. 2 and defers to the University of Hawai'i.

EOEL is guided by the principles of diversity and multilingualism, recognizing that a strong Hawai'i weaves families' home language and culture into our collective work on behalf of children. Our Office is committed to providing high-quality early learning programs and services to all keiki across the State, including in the Hawaiian language and supports the sustenance and expansion of Hawaiian medium early learning programs.

This measure would ensure the continuation of a laboratory school program, which is currently a Hawaiian medium program, at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. It is also in alignment with the recommendations put forth from our governing board, the Early Learning Board, through the "Road Map, Including Proposed Legislation, for Implementation of Act 046, Session Laws of Hawaii 2020" pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution 217 (2022).

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

**TO:** Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair  
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

**FROM:** Robert G. Peters, Chair  
Early Learning Board

**SUBJECT:** **Measure:** S.B. 2937, SD 1, HD 2 – RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING  
**Hearing Date:** Wednesday, March 27, 2024  
**Time:** 2:00 p.m.  
**Location:** VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
Conference Room 308

Early Learning Board Position: Support Intent

The Early Learning Board, governing board for the Executive Office on Early Learning, supports S.B. No. 2937, HD 1, SD 1 and defers to the University of Hawai‘i.

EOEL is guided by the principles of diversity and multilingualism, recognizing that a strong Hawai‘i weaves family’s home language and culture into our collective work on behalf of children. EOEL is committed to providing high-quality early learning programs and services to all keiki across the State, including in the Hawaiian language and supports the sustenance and expansion of Hawaiian medium early learning programs.

This measure would ensure the continuation of a laboratory school program, which is currently a Hawaiian medium program, at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. It is also in alignment with the recommendations put forth from the Early Learning Board, through the “Road Map, Including Proposed Legislation, for Implementation of Act 046, Session Laws of Hawaii 2020” pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution 217 (2022).

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

**SB-2937-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 1:55:47 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kupuna for the Mo'opuna	Kupuna for the Moopuna	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**In STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2937 SD1 HD2**

Mahalo nui for this bill!



Committee on Finance  
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair  
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

March 27, 2024

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

We support SB2937 SD1 HD2, which repeals the sunset date for the exemption of laboratory school programs of the Hawaiian language college at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo from state English-medium standards, assessments, performance ratings, staff qualifications and staff training requirements.

As a supporter of equity in education, we support the teaching and learning of Hawaiian language, which is an official language of the State.

University of Hawai'i at Hilo continues to develop its own unique with respect to early learning in the Hawaiian language medium. Repealing the sunset date would allow for its groundbreaking system to be refined and expanded. We support University of Hawai'i at Hilo's testimony on this measure.

Hui for Excellence in Education, or "HE'E," promotes a child-centered and strength-based public education system in which families, communities and schools are valued and empowered to help every student succeed. HE'E works to bring diverse stakeholders together to harness collective energy, share resources, and identify opportunities for progressive action in education.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Our support for this measure represents at least a 75% consensus of our voting membership.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura  
HE'E Coalition Director



Coalition Members and Participants

Academy 21

Alliance for Place Based Learning

American Civil Liberties Union

Atherton YMCA

Education Institute of Hawai'i

\*Faith Action for Community Equity

Fresh Leadership LLC

Girl Scouts Hawai'i

\*HawaiiKidsCAN

\*Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance

\*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

\*Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists

Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars

\*Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Hawai'i Education Association

Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition

\* Hawai'i State PTSA

Hawai'i State Student Council

Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Head Start Collaboration Office

It's All About Kids

\*INPEACE

Joint Venture Education Forum

Junior Achievement of Hawaii

Kamehameha Schools

Kanu Hawai'i

Kaua'i Ho'okele Council

Keiki to Career Kaua'i

Kupu A'e

\*Leaders for the Next Generation

Learning First

McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds

Native Hawaiian Education Council

Our Public School

\*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

\*Parents and Children Together

\*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i

Special Education Provider Alliance

\*Teach for America

The Learning Coalition

US PACOM

University of Hawai'i College of Education

\* Youth Service Hawai'i

*Voting Members (\*) Voting member organizations vote on action items while individual and non-voting participants may collaborate on all efforts within the Coalition.*



## *Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u*

*"No 'Ane'i Ko Kākou Ola"*

25 March 2024

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair  
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Date of Hearing: 03-27-2024

Time: 2:00pm

Location: Conference Room 308

Testimony of Dr. Kauanoe Kamanā, Director, Principal  
Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u

SB2937, SD1, HD1 RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING  
**STRONGLY SUPPORT**

E ka Luna Ho'omalua Yamashita, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalua Kitagawa me ke Kōmike Kālā, Aloha pumehana kākou,

SB 2937 SD1 HD2 ensures protection under Act 46 (2020) relative to distinctive Early Learning access and support for Hawaiian language medium childcare.

Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u **strongly supports SB 2937 SD1 HD2**. If this bill does not pass, we will not be able to respond and effectively grow our current nationally recognized program. We will not be able to respond and expand our current Hawaiian medium preK program to serve more families on our long waiting list.

My name is Dr. Kauanoe Kamanā, Director and Principal of Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u (Nāwahī), a P-12 laboratory school of the Hawaiian Language College, Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani (KH'UOK) at UH-Hilo. Nāwahī's current enrollment is 670 and is the largest of any school taught entirely through Hawaiian in the state. Nāwahī's main campus is located in Kea'au, Hawai'i and has two satellite sites, one in Wai'anae, O'ahu and the other in Waimea, Hawai'i.

As a PreK laboratory school, Nāwahī fulfills the requirements of the Hawaiian Language College. Some of which are: aligning with the College's required rigorous total Hawaiian medium curriculum, required parent program, rigorous scientifically developed assessments and Fall-Spring-and Summer live-in trainings. We and others in the College's PreK laboratory school program commit to having our teachers access the College's electronically delivered courses in Hawaiian medium early education taught through Hawaiian and the College's progression of Hawaiian language and culture courses taught through Hawaiian. The College also has a progression of courses that move individuals in our program from being an unlicensed PreK-teacher in a laboratory school to a fully licensed teacher for early elementary education. The program is, therefore, also a teacher development incubator. It helps address the shortage of Hawaiian proficient certified teachers for state and charter elementary

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Hawaiian language programs, and helps deliver a nationally recognized quality Indigenous language medium early education program.

Our PreK program is fully integrated in a seamless system with our four kindergarten classrooms and indeed with our full system through elementary, middle school and high school. Parents choose Nāwahī for its integrity, research history and a nearly 30-year reputation of providing quality education rooted in the Kumu Honua Maui Ola philosophy and in the full use and study of the Hawaiian language.

We draw students on our three campuses primarily from what are considered “high risk” populations – Hawaiian Homes populations in Wai‘anae, Waimea, Pana‘ewa, Maku‘u and from the Native Hawaiian population in the district of Puna. These are populations where the mainstream state education system has had major challenges. Yet, having worked over time with this population of students and families, Nāwahī has maintained a high graduation rate as well as a high college-going rate. Our data show averages to be higher than the state public school average for Native Hawaiians. Indeed, our outcomes exceed the state average for public school students.

Nāwahī is proud to be at the forefront of Hawaiian language medium education. Nāwahī is the most developed and largest program taught through an Indigenous language of the United States. We are recognized by the US government and national foundations funding tribal schools as the gold standard model for Native America. Our program including its preK component have hosted numerous tribal educational leaders, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, the head of the Office of Indian Education of the US Department of Education and other national and international education experts. As of October 2023, we were named as a core component of the new National Native American Language Resource Center of the US Department of Education to serve Indigenous language-based education in the fifty states, including the Indigenous peoples of the three US Pacific Island Territories, and the three US compact countries of the former US Trust Territories of the Pacific. The focus of this new National Center is to address education through the medium of Indigenous languages—those formerly banned and/or suppressed under US federally imposed and operated educational laws, policies and programs. SB 2937 SD1 HD2 is integral in assuring Nāwahī’s ability to carry out that federally assigned responsibility.

Nāwahī is not opposed to the Governor’s Office of Early Education developing a means for the state to provide early education through Hawaiian following the law and its provisions that are based in years of research by the national English medium preschool research establishment in major universities. We support that as a choice for families.

The legislature itself established the UHH Hawaiian Language College and its laboratory school program. The legislature itself initiated the current exemption. Both have been highly successful. SB 2937 SD1 HD2 builds upon that proven success. Again, I urge passage.

Me ka mahalo ‘oia‘i‘o,



Director, Principal





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ahapunanaleo.org

Committee on Finance  
Representative Yamashita  
Representative Kitagawa  
Wednesday, March 27, 2024  
TIME: 2:00p  
Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the Committee on Finance,

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo strongly supports SB 2937 SD 1 HD 2 relating to access to learning.

**Ka Papa Alaka'i**  
**Board of Directors**

Kauanoë Kamanā  
Pelekikena

Larry Kimura

William H. Wilson

Ki'ope Raymond

Huilau Wilson

Keawe Lopes

**Ka Luna Ho'okele**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

Ka'iulani J.K.N. Laehā

**Ka Luna Ho'okō**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

K. Sean Kekina

**Nā Papahana**  
**Pūnana Leo**  
**Pūnana Leo Programs**

**Aukukui**

**Ne'epapa**

**Kula Kamali'i**

- Pūnana Leo o Hilo
- Pūnana Leo o Kaula'i
- Pūnana Leo o Maui
- Pūnana Leo o Moloka'i
- Pūnana Leo o Wai'anāe
- Pūnana Leo o Kona
- Pūnana Leo o Waimea
- Pūnana Leo o Mānoa
- Pūnana Leo o Ko'olau Piko
- Pūnana Leo o Lahaina
- Pūnana Leo o Hāna
- Pūnana Leo o Nu'uānu
- Pūnana Leo o Waiāluā

SB 2937 SD 1 HD 2 addresses standards, assessments, performance ratings, staff qualifications and staff training for the UHH Hawaiian language college laboratory program in which little keiki in Hawaiian language medium environments will thrive.

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo, a laboratory school of the Hawaiian language college, was founded on the desire to save our 'ōlelo Hawai'i and opened its early learning child care centers 40 years ago staffed by uncertified proficient Hawaiian speakers trained by us and the Hawaiian speaking faculty of UH Hilo. Pūnana Leo keiki became fluent in Hawaiian and families engaged in their children's education. The Pūnana Leo is internationally renowned and is the base from which the state DOE and Charter Hawaiian medium and immersion programs have grown.

When we began there were less than 50 children who spoke the Hawaiian language. It was through our own traditional beliefs, knowledge and practices and dedicated non-certified kupuna and kumu, UH Hilo linguist designed curriculum, federally supported assessments and linguistically aligned training designed by UH Hilo professors that the Pūnana Leo movement continues. Today we have 12 licensed child care centers, 2 licensed infant toddler programs, and a recently established Lahaina family engagement program to support our keiki that were displaced from the Pūnana Leo o Lahaina that was lost to the fire. We serve over 300 Hawaiian language speaking families each year in various communities throughout the state.

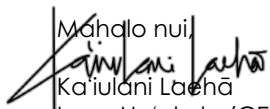
Our Pūnana Leo graduates are successfully serving our communities in various roles as entrepreneurs, kumu/teachers, physicians, police and fire rescue, EMTs, lawyers, licensed contractors, musicians, composers, Grammy artists, professors including at prestigious colleges like Oxford in England.

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Ke Kula 'o Nāwahīkalanī'ōpu'u and the Hawaiian language college demonstrate a successful P-25 education system, leading the nation in the indigenous language revitalization movement. Although we have made progress towards a living Hawaiian language, SB2937 and similar legislation is needed to support the growth and expansion of the model being demonstrated.

This bill is critical for the existence of 'Aha Pūnana Leo Hawaiian language medium early learning and child care. Without protections and considerations like these, well-intentioned government legislation applying mainstream English language medium program requirements will terminate our current programs and decimate our endangered language. The research base of the standardized qualifications and assessments imposed on our programs is primarily from large English medium universities outside Hawai'i. That research base of mainstream English medium early education includes no knowledge of what it truly takes to revitalize an endangered indigenous language. To our successful 'Aha Pūnana Leo program to follow the mainstream English research base is at a minimum irresponsible.

SB 2937 SD 1 HD 2 will provide an opportunity to continue to grow the body of research and development with the premiere US university program for language revitalization for an equitable Hawaiian medium early learning system. We urge you to pass this bill.

It is also worth noting that the state Early Learning Board's Report containing a Road Map for the implementation of Act 46, SLH 2020 (pursuant to SCR 217 in 2022), specifically calls for the permanent exemption of the College of Hawaiian Language's laboratory programs and all Hawaiian Medium learning environments in two of its four action items, which is in alignment with SB 2937 SD 1 HD 2.

Māhalo nui,  
  
Ka'iulani Laehā  
Luna Ho'okele (CEO)  
'Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc.



16-120 'Ōpūkaha'ia St  
Kea'au, HI 96749  
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www.nawahi.org

### Ka Papa Alaka'i

Dr. Kēhaulani  
'Aipia-Peters,  
Pelekikena

Kēhaulani Shintani,  
Hope Pelekikena

Kyla Manzano  
Kākau 'Ōlelo

Pu'ukū

Kamalei Hayes

Dr. Kauanoē  
Kamanā

Nāmaka Rawlins

Dr. Pila Wilson

Kayla Asing

'Ānela Freitas

Ka'iu Kimura

No 'Ane'i Ko  
Kākou Ola!

Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair  
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Date of Hearing: 03-27-2024  
Time: 2pm  
Location: Conference Room 308

Testimony of Dr. Kēhaulani 'Aipia-Peters, Governing Board Chair  
Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani 'ōpu'ū Iki LPCS

### SB 2937 SD1 HD2, RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING **STRONGLY SUPPORT**

E nā Po'o Kōmike a me nā Lālā Kōmike o ka Māhele Kālā, aloha nui kākou

My name is Dr. Kēhaulani 'Aipia-Peters, and I am the Governing Board Chair of Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani 'ōpu'ū Iki, Laboratory Public Charter School. I am providing written testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB 2937 SD1 HD2.

We, the governing board of Nāwahī, **STRONGLY SUPPORT** SB 2937 SD1 HD2 that repeals the sunset date for the exemption of laboratory school programs of the Hawaiian language college at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo from state English-medium standards, assessments, performance ratings, staff qualifications, and staff training requirements.

Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani 'ōpu'ū is a laboratory school program of Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani, the Hawaiian Language college at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. Repealing the sunset date of these exemptions ensures the continuance of our progress in Hawaiian Medium education and language revitalization. These exemptions also address the need for strategic and relevant assessments and evaluations that do not defer to English Medium education laws and policies.

The passage of SB 2937 SD1 HD2 indicates an awareness of the significance of the Hawaiian language college at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo as they address the needs of and ensure the forward progress of Hawaiian language medium education.

Mahalo,

Dr. Kēhaulani 'Aipia-Peters  
Chair, Governing Board  
Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani 'ōpu'ū Iki LPCS



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Bonnie Irwin, Chancellor  
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

#### SB 2937 SD1 HD2 – RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on SB 2937 SD1 HD2. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) supports passage of SB 2937 SD1 HD2, which seeks to repeal the sunset date for the exemption of laboratory school programs of the Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani (also known as the College of Hawaiian Language) (CoHL) at UH Hilo from state English-medium standards, assessments, performance ratings, staff qualifications, and staff training requirements that were established by Act 46, SLH 2020. The intent is to ensure that the CoHL's Hawaiian-medium laboratory schools are not subject to non-applicable English-medium standards, assessments, ratings, and requirements but instead are able to use rigorous Hawaiian-medium measures and guidelines.

The legislature established the CoHL under HRS §§ 304A-1301-1302 in 1997, providing for the incorporation of laboratory schools that now include four K-12 charter schools as well as all of the 'Aha Pūnana Leo's ('APL) Hawaiian Medium preschools (13 Pūnana Leo) throughout the state. These Hawaiian Medium Pūnana Leo laboratory preschools are directly impacted by Act 46.

The purpose of Act 46 was to increase access to child care and early learning opportunities for children in Hawai'i while ensuring "that the implementation of new and expanded programs pursuant to this Act aligns with other statutory provisions that provide distinctive support for education through the medium of the Hawaiian language." Some of these statutory provisions include Act 47, SLH 1986, that affirmed the DOE's power and duties to include programs in the Hawaiian language; Act 79 of the same year that exempted teachers in Hawaiian language early childhood programs from academic certification; as well as Act 178, SLH 2012, that established the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) and affirmed that the state's public pre-kindergarten program shall prepare children for school and active participation in society through the use of either of Hawai'i's two official languages.

This statutory support for public education through the Hawaiian language has allowed for the development of Hawaiian-medium standards, assessments, performance ratings, staff qualifications, and staff training requirements. The CoHL has worked in

partnership with the 'APL for over 40 years to develop performance standards and tools to assess progress across domains, including Cognitive Development, Leadership and Team Building Skills, Literacy Development, and Hawaiian Language Proficiency. Testing instruments include Hawaiian-medium Curriculum-Based Measures that are being used at various sites for kindergarten entry assessments as required by §302A-1165. The CoHL and 'APL partnership also provides preservice and inservice teacher training via coursework in the CoHL's Kahuawaiola teacher education program as well as ongoing professional development training to cultivate highly competent educators, addressing Hawaiian language proficiency, pedagogy, assessment, family engagement, and curriculum.

Furthermore, in October 2023, the CoHL was designated as the inaugural National Native American Language Resource Center that, in partnership with the 'APL, will continue this work of developing standards, curriculum, teacher training and assessments not only for Hawaiian medium programs, but for Native American Language communities nationwide.

It is also worth noting that the Early Learning Board's Road Map for the implementation of Act 46, SLH 2020 (as required by SCR 217 in 2022), specifically calls for the permanent exemption of the CoHL's laboratory programs and all Hawaiian Medium learning environments from non-applicable standards, assessments, performance ratings, staff qualifications, and staff training requirements in two of its four action items, which is what SB 2937 SD1 HD2 seeks to accomplish.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill.

**SB-2937-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 10:35:56 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Moiwai Victor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kāko'o SB2937

**SB-2937-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 10:36:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tehani Galdeira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Culture is important and valued in any area of the world! I support this bill for many reasons: one of which is the fact of teaching the next generation cultural ways to provide for themselves, their family and the community! It also provides knowledge of ways to give back to the community and mālama 'āina!

**SB-2937-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 10:36:49 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kawailele Aki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kāko‘o pila SB2937

**SB-2937-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 11:29:35 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Kalei Hoku Kalai-Aguiar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair, Committee on Finance

Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair, Committee on Finance

House Committee on Finance Members

FROM: Dr. Dawn Kaleihökü Kala'i-Aguiar

Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u

RE: **SB 2937, SD1, HD2, Relating to Access to Learning**

**Hearing on March 27, 2024**

**IN STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2937, SD1, HD2**

Aloha e ka Luna Ho'omalua Yamashita, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalua Kitagawa, a me nā lālā Kōmike Kālā,

My name is Kaleihökü Kala'i-Aguiar and I am a kumu and a proud parent of two graduates from the Pūnana Leo O Hilo and Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u (Nāwahī) Hawaiian language medium laboratory school programs of Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'eliko'ani (Ka Haka 'Ula) College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. I am testifying in **STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2937, SD1, HD2**, which seeks to repeal the sunset date for the exemption of laboratory school programs of Ka Haka 'Ula from state English-medium standards, assessments, performance ratings, staff qualifications, and staff training requirements. Ka Haka 'Ula has been instrumental in developing Hawaiian-medium standards, assessments, etc. for their laboratory schools since 1997 when the Pūnana Leo and Nāwahī first became laboratory schools. Ka Haka 'Ula remains committed to leading improvements in Hawaiian language medium education by



fostering innovative ideas in research, curriculum development, teacher training and program growth with the intent of revitalizing the Hawaiian language to its status as a living language once again.

I urge the Committee to **PASS SB 2937, SD1, HD2**. Mahalo nui loa!

**SB-2937-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 12:26:52 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
C.R.P. Montague-Mullins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

**SB-2937-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 1:02:32 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melissa Schafer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My son attends a Hawaiian language medium school. I support this measure that repeals the sunset date for the exemption of laboratory school programs of the Hawaiian language college at the University of Hawaii at Hilo from state English-medium standards, assessments, performance ratings, staff qualifications, and staff training requirements.

**SB-2937-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 1:52:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Hoku Pihana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a parent of the Hawaiian Immersion school system, I feel that it's imperative that we continue to support their efforts to perpetuate the use of Hawaiian language in our communities across the state of Hawai'i so our children know who that are as Native Hawaiians and how special and important our native language is to our families, communities, and Hawai'i Nei.

**SB-2937-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 2:27:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anuheia St. Laurent	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a Native Hawaiian, as a parent of children who attend Hawaiian Immersion at a Public Charter School, and as a Mental Health Therapist specifically for Native Hawaiians, I strongly support SB2937 and believe it is owed to the Native people of this land who have been illegally overtaken by the United States of America. So many of our people's problems stem from displacement and disconnect from land, community, traditional practices, including ways of learning and teaching. This needs to be restored.