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KE KIA'ĀINA



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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL
RELATING TO EDUCATION

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

BY

JOHN P. ALAMODIN
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

FEBRUARY 7, 2025

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice-Chair Iwamoto, and members of the committee:

I am John P. Alamodin, Director, Office of Veterans Services, State of Hawaii,
Department of Defense

The Office of Veterans Services (OVS) provides written testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB 628.

In 1940, Congress enacts the Selective Training and Service Act. All males between the ages of 21 and 35 are ordered to register for the draft and the first national lottery is held. As World War II progresses, the draft age is lowered to 18 and men are called to service not by lottery number but by age, with the oldest going first. In 1941, following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Congress gives the President power to send draftees anywhere in the world, removing the distinctions between draftees, Active Duty, National Guardsmen and Reservists, and creating one army made up of all. In 1947, President Harry S. Truman recommends to Congress that the 1940 Selective Training and Service Act expire and that the level of required military forces be maintained by means of voluntary enlistments. In 1950, the Korean War draft calls up men between the ages of eighteen-and-a-half and 35 for terms of duty averaging two years. In 1951, the Universal Military Training and Service Act is passed, requiring males between 18 and 26 to register. In 1952, Congress enacts the Reserve Forces Act, compelling every man who is drafted or enlisted to an eight-year obligation to

military service. After a term of active duty is completed, one is assigned to standby reserve and can be called back to active duty upon a declaration of war or national emergency. In 1969, President Nixon orders the "19-year-old draft" stating if a young man is not drafted at age 19, he will be exempt from future military service except in the event of war or national emergency. Deferrals are allowed for hardship cases, certain occupations, conscientious objectors, clergymen, and high school and college students. One year later Nixon will argue in favor of ending student deferments. In 1969, President Nixon orders a "random selection" lottery system for selecting men to serve in the war in Vietnam, changing the previous system of drafting according to age. In 1973, the 1967 Selective Service Act, extended through an act of Congress in 1971, expires, ending the authority to induct draft registrants.

Data through a limited literature review would note there were 4,336 residents of the Hawaiian Islands drafted in the United States military during the First World War (September 1917-November 1918) and 32,197 residents drafted during the Second World War (November 1940-October 1946). There are no statistics available as to the number of Hawai'i's residents drafted during the Korean War (June 1950-June 1953) and the Vietnam War (August 1964-February 1973), but there were over 25,000 of Hawai'i's residents who served during the Korean War and 13,000 of Hawai'i's residents who served during the Vietnam War.

Summarily, we support efforts to honor those who sacrificed and served to defend and to protect our country and allies. We support the program described in this measure to provide service members in the identified wartime eras who had their high school education interrupted to be awarded their diploma.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

John P. Alamodin, john.p.alamodin@hawaii.gov

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Date: 02/07/2025

Time: 02:30 PM

Location: 411 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Public Safety

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 0628, HD1 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Authorizes the Department of Education to establish a program to award high school diplomas to persons who did not receive a diploma as a result of compulsory or voluntary induction into the armed services and persons whose high school education was interrupted due to wartime practices during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 628 HD 1, which authorizes the Department to award high school diplomas to individuals who did not receive a diploma due to military service and individuals whose high school education was interrupted due to wartime practices during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War.

Act 101, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, which previously authorized the Department to issue the Kupono diploma to World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans, as well as individuals whose schooling was interrupted due to military service or internment, sunset in 2020. The Department would appreciate authorization to resume awarding high school diplomas to the individuals outlined in this bill in recognition of their sacrifices during wartime.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 628 HD 1.



**SUPPORT OF HB 628, HD1
RELATING TO EDUCATION**

House Committee on Public Safety
The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Friday, February 7, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference
Hawaii State Capitol; 415 South Beretania Street

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Military Affairs Council ("MAC") wishes to offer our support of HB 628, HD1 which authorizes the Department of Education to establish a program to award high school diplomas to persons who did not receive a diploma as a result of compulsory or voluntary induction into the armed services and persons whose high school education was interrupted due to wartime practices during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War.

The MAC was established in 1985 when the Chamber was appointed by the State to serve as the liaison to the military. The MAC advocates on behalf of Hawaii's military, and is comprised of business leaders, academic institutions, State and County officials, members of the CODEL, community leaders, labor unions and organizations and retired U.S. flag and general officers. The MAC works to support Hawaii's location as a strategic U.S. headquarters in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region which is crucial for U.S. national and homeland security.

HB 628, HD1 would provide high school diplomas to those whose education was interrupted by military service during World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam War. Veterans deserve recognition for educational sacrifices during wartime. By authorizing the Department of Education to award these diplomas, we honor those who put national service ahead of their personal educational goals. We applaud the legislature for advancing this measure to restore dignity, acknowledge sacrifice, and offer long-overdue educational justice to those who defended our country.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.

Testimony in Support of HB628
Authorizing the Department of Education to Establish a Program for Awarding High School Diplomas to Veterans and Those Affected by Wartime Practices

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the House Public Safety Committee,

I am truly honored to provide testimony in support of HB628, which seeks to reauthorize the Department of Education's ***Kūpono Diploma Program***. This vital program offers honorary high school diplomas to individuals who, due to their voluntary or compulsory induction into the armed services or the traumatic impacts of wartime practices during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War, were unable to complete their education. Additionally, the program allows posthumous awards and recognizes education interruptions experienced by Hawaii residents who were interned in relocation camps during World War II.

The original Act 101 was passed in 2007 and co-sponsored by former State Senator Norman Sakamoto, and former State Representative and late U.S. Congressman K. Mark Takai. It was supported by the Hawaii Joint Venture Education Forum, a partnership founded in 1999 by the late U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye. This collaboration unites Hawaii's military services, public schools, and community stakeholders in a shared mission of supporting public schools and keiki.

The sacrifices made by our kūpuna, particularly those who served during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, are profound. Many of these brave individuals, now senior citizens, faced the heartbreaking reality of having to pause or even forgo their high school education to serve their country. This honorary diploma represents far more than just a certificate; it is a symbol of the recognition and dignity they so richly deserve. For many, it opens doors to employment opportunities, provides a sense of personal fulfillment, and restores a feeling of completeness in their educational journey. It serves as a heartfelt reminder that their courage and sacrifices have not gone unnoticed.

During my time as the Department's Military Liaison for 11 years, under former State Superintendents Patricia Hamamoto and Kathryn Matayoshi, I had the privilege of overseeing this program, which awarded 26 diplomas - one posthumously. I remember a Korean War veteran who was drafted as a teenager. After the war, he worked in various jobs but found himself needing proof of his education for a new employer. In another touching case, a World War II veteran shared with his family while in a nursing home that he had never completed high school but always wished he could. The opportunity to receive his honorary diploma brought him and his family a profound sense of joy and closure. Additionally, one former Hawaii resident who was sent to California's Tule Lake Relocation Facility with her family during World War II received a McKinley High School diploma. Read more: bit.ly/410fQ3w



I strongly urge you to support HB628, which will ensure that our kūpuna impacted by wartime activities continue to be honored for their immense sacrifices. The ***Kūpono Diploma Program*** is not only a testament to their contributions but also a way for us to acknowledge Hawaii's historical legacy. Mahalo nui loa for your consideration and support of this important measure. Your empathy and commitment to our kūpuna mean so much.

Sincerely,
Cherise Aguada Imai
February 5, 2025

HB-628-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 6:55:59 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenny Wusstig	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Why would raising taxes be essential to the educational system when time and time again in the past it hasn't solved the problem in the state ? Are there no other fiscal alternatives to this solution ?