



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 89 HD1 RELATING TO TEACHER EDUCATION

House Committee on Education

February 13, 2025

2:00 pm

Conference Room 309

Aloha e Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Chica, and Members of the Committee on Education,

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB 89 HD1**, which establishes a Teacher Housing Assistance Program aimed at improving teacher recruitment and retention, particularly in hard-to-staff schools. OHA commends the introduction of this bill and acknowledges the amendments made in HB 89 HD1 that strengthen its intent and implementation, especially for public charter schools and enhanced eligibility criteria for teachers in hard-to-fill positions. These adjustments will have a more significant impact on Native Hawaiian educators and the communities they serve.

OHA appreciates the amendments made to HB89 HD1, particularly those that outline clear criteria for eligibility and ensure that the program can effectively serve teachers in need. These adjustments ensure that the bill can be successfully implemented and reach those teachers who will benefit most from this support.

Hawai'i continues to face a chronic teacher shortage, with approximately 10% of teachers leaving the profession annually¹, and over 60,000 students lacking a certified teacher.² One of the leading factors behind teacher turnover is the high cost of living, particularly in relation to housing. The lack of affordable housing options disproportionately impacts underserved communities, including rural areas where many Native Hawaiian students live and attend school.³

Native Hawaiian students are particularly affected by teacher shortages, and their academic success is closely tied to the stability of their educators. The ability to retain

¹ Hawai'i Department of Education. n.d. Employment.Report._School.Year.8688_89; Hawai'i Public Schools.<https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/Reports/EmploymentReport2022-23.pdf>

² Hawai'i.State.Teachers.Association; n.d; Ending.Hawai'i's.Teacher.Shortage.Crisis; Accessed.686780; <https://www.hstaj.org/Crisis/>

³ News, A. N. 2020. "Lack of Affordable Housing Is Causing a Teacher Shortage in Hawaii." NYC.Independent.Press, December 31, 2020. <https://nycip.org/lack-of-affordable-housing-is-causing-a-teacher-shortage-in-hawaii/>.

quality teachers in these communities is essential for the success of these students⁴. Providing housing assistance directly supports Native Hawaiian educators by easing their financial burden and helping them remain in their communities to serve the students who need them most.

Moreover, HB 89 HD1 aligns with OHA's Mana i Maui Ola framework, which includes goals and strategies for education and housing that directly benefit Native Hawaiian communities. The program's potential to provide housing assistance will contribute to OHA's broader efforts to create economic self-sufficiency for Native Hawaiian educators, many of whom face significant barriers in securing affordable housing in one of the most expensive places to live in the nation. Housing assistance will not only improve their quality of life but also sustain their careers and their ability to support the academic success of the students they teach.

This bill is a critical step toward creating a supportive learning environment for students by ensuring their teachers are able to remain in the communities they serve, reducing turnover, and enhancing the overall quality of education. By stabilizing teachers' financial situations, HB 89 HD1 strengthens the well-being of Native Hawaiian communities and promotes positive educational outcomes for Native Hawaiian students.

OHA appreciates the amendments made in HB 89 HD1 and is grateful for the committee's attention to the needs of Native Hawaiian educators. **We strongly urge the Committee to pass HB 89 HD1**, as it is a vital measure for retaining educators and ensuring equitable and quality education for Native Hawaiian students. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 89 HD1.

⁴ Kukahiko, K., K. Sang, 'Ā. Iwane, K. Nakasone, A. Austin, P. Fernandez, D. Tanigawa, K. Makua, K. Ka'uhane, L. Nerveza-Clark, D. Andrade, K. Wong, E. Chang, and K. Dukelow. 2024. "Deconstructing the School to Prison Pipeline in Hawai'i: Revitalization and Restoration of Kānaka, 'Āina and Kuleana Through Language and Cultural Practices." *JCSCORE* 10 (1): 83–105. <https://doi.org/10.15763/issn.2642-2387.2024.10.1.83-105>.



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

Date: 02/13/2025

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 0089, HD1 RELATING TO TEACHER HOUSING.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes the Teacher Home Assistance Program to provide housing vouchers to certain eligible teachers. Appropriates funds out of the Teachers' Housing Revolving Fund. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding HB 89, HD 1, relating to teacher housing assistance.

The Department supports efforts to address Hawai'i's teacher recruitment and retention challenges. Our state's high cost of living and a shortage of affordable housing impact our ability to attract and retain qualified educators throughout our school system.

We recommend the following clarifications to strengthen the bill's implementation. In Section (g) (2), we recommend amending it to: "Has taught at a public school or public charter school" to ensure that public charter schools are specifically mentioned.

The Department also recommends that the requirement of "one year of teaching prior to the application date" should refer to the year immediately preceding the application.

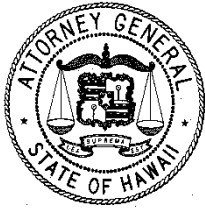
The Department also has concerns about repayment for "eligible teachers" that do not fulfill the criteria. For example, a teacher that does not stay for five consecutive years.

While the Department supports the intent of this measure, successful implementation would require dedicated staff and financial resources to verify eligibility, process applications, administer the housing voucher program, and manage contracts to collect repayments for teachers that no longer meet the "eligible teacher" criteria. The Department appreciates the inclusion of funding in this

proposal but asks that any additional funding or positions not affect the Department's request in its Governor-approved budget.

The Department remains committed to working with the Legislature to develop comprehensive solutions to our educator workforce challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 89 HD 1.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 89, H.D. 1, RELATING TO TEACHER HOUSING.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

DATE: Thursday, February 13, 2025 **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 309

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Anne T. Horiuchi or Randall M. Wat, Deputy Attorneys General

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the following comments.

The purpose of this bill is to alleviate the financial burden on teachers and improve teacher recruitment and retention by establishing a Teacher Housing Assistance Program to provide housing vouchers to certain eligible teachers. It appropriates funds out of the Teachers' Housing Revolving Fund.

The bill sets forth eligibility criteria for receiving these housing vouchers. See page 4, line 19, through page 5, line 14. One of the eligibility requirements is to "[c]ommit[] to teach at a hard-to-fill school, as determined by the department, or a public charter school for no less than five consecutive years[.]" Page 5, lines 5-7. However, the bill does not specify the consequences if a teacher fails to fulfill this commitment. For clarity, the Department recommends amending the bill to include provisions addressing the repayment of vouchers in such cases. We suggest inserting the following new subsections (f) through (h) in the new section to be added to chapter 302A, starting on page 4, line 17:

(f) If a voucher recipient fails to satisfy the work requirements in accordance with subsection (j)(4), the recipient shall repay the total amount of voucher funds received as a loan repayable to the department. The repayment shall be subject to the terms and conditions set by the department, including circumstances under which recipients may be eligible for deferment or forgiveness due to hardship or inability to secure

employment, as well as potential for fees for the collection of delinquent repayment.

(g) Voucher funds repaid by the voucher recipient pursuant to subsection (f) shall be deposited into the teachers' housing revolving fund established pursuant to section 302A-833.

(h) In accordance with chapter 103D, the department may enter into written contracts with collection agencies to collect delinquent repayment of vouchers owed to the department pursuant to subsection (f). A collection agency that enters into a written contract with the department to collect delinquent voucher repayments pursuant to this section may collect a fee from the debtor in accordance with the terms of, and up to the amounts authorized in, the written contract.

The current subsections (f) and (g) should be redesignated as (i) and (j), respectively, and the reference to subsection (e)¹ on page 3, line 15, should be changed to refer to subsection (j).

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

¹ This reference to subsection (e) (page 3, line 15) in section 302A- (d) as listing the eligibility criteria appears to be a typographical error. The correct subsection that lists eligibility criteria is subsection (g) (page 4, line 19, through page 5, line 14).

COUNTY COUNCIL

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KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Fern Holland
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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawaii 96766

February 11, 2025

TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
HB 133, HD 1, RELATING TO SURFING
AND
HB 89, HD 1, RELATING TO TEACHER HOUSING
House Committee on Education
House Committee on Economic Development & Technology
Thursday, February 13, 2025
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309
Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Woodson, Chair Ilagan, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 133, HD 1, Relating to Surfing and HB 89, HD 1, Relating to Teacher Housing. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I wholeheartedly support the intent of HB 133, HD 1 and HB 89, HD 1, which would greatly affect the Kaua'i community.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 133, HD 1 and HB 89, HD 1. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

ADDISON BULOSAN
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:dmc



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
The House of Representatives
Committee on Education
Committee on Economic Development & Technology

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 13, 2025

H.B. 89, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO TEACHER HOUSING

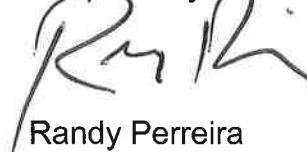
The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO wishes to provide comments on H.B. 89, H.D. 1, which proposes to establish a Teacher Housing Assistance Program to provide housing vouchers to certain eligible teachers and appropriates funds out of the Teachers' Housing Revolving Fund.

Under Act 172, SLH 2023, the legislature identified affordable housing as a key strategy for recruiting and retaining the education workforce; not just teachers. Similarly, the legislature should consider providing a "workforce home assistance program" to make other government employees eligible since they face the same low salaries and high cost of living.

The HGEA represents thousands of employees who work for the DOE and public charter schools who make less than a starting Hawaii teacher's salary. Some of these employees also work in hard-to-staff locations with high turnover. They, too, should benefit from a housing assistance program being administered by the department for which they work. They, too, deserve to be eligible for a housing voucher to assist with rent, mortgage, or a down payment for their primary residence.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on H.B. 89, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,



Randy Perreira
Executive Director



**HAWAI'I STATE
TEACHER
ASSOCIATION**

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Ann Mahi
Executive Director

LATE

LATE

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: HB 89 HD 1– Relating to Teacher Housing

Position: Support

Hearing: Thursday, February 13, 2025, 2:00 pm, Room 309

Submitter: Osa Tui, Jr., President - Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) supports HB 89, which would establish the Teacher Home Assistance Program to provide housing vouchers to certain eligible teachers and appropriates funds out of the Teachers' Housing Revolving Fund.

Hawai'i's high cost of living, with homes costing 2.7 times the national average, poses a significant challenge to attracting and retaining qualified teachers, especially in rural and underserved communities. The ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) initiative reports that a family of four in Hawai'i needs to earn \$107,796 annually to afford basic necessities, a threshold many teachers and their families do not meet. This financial strain forces many educators to seek second jobs or leave the profession altogether, leading to high turnover rates and a reliance on emergency hires.

The Teacher Home Assistance Program proposed in HB HB 89 would provide crucial financial assistance to help teachers afford housing costs. This would not only alleviate some of the

economic burden on educators but also serve as a powerful recruitment and retention tool. By enabling teachers to live closer to their schools and communities, we can foster stronger relationships, improve teacher morale, and ultimately enhance the quality of education for our keiki.

We urge the committee to pass HB 89 and invest in the well-being of our teachers. This program is a vital step towards ensuring that all students in Hawai'i have access to a quality education.

Mahalo.

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:45:23 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Iolani Kuoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

BILL No: SB89

In Support and Testimony Letter Regarding SB89

February 11, 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE REGULAR
SESSION OF 2025

[COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION](#) -

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Rep Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

[COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY](#)

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Rep. Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Dear Representative Woodson, La Chica, Ilagan and Hussey:

I am in support of HB 89, Appropriates funds out of the Teachers' Housing Revolving Fund. It is very important to establish the Teacher Home Assistance Program to provide housing vouchers to certain eligible teachers. I am a resident of Molokai, Maui County Hawaii, and it is difficult to seek housing for teachers who are interested in making Moloka'i their home without the support of housing. Many teachers, tend to transfer from Moloka'i because of the unavailable housing for teachers.

Your support will help teachers seek assistance for housing. Your support with HB89 should be a priority.

Mahalo,

‘Iolani Kuoha

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:05:23 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tes Kaulia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

https://docs.google.com/file/d/1CHfVZoJTHX6HC2YPrsf6aqqLH4VuZmeP/edit?usp=docslist_api&filetype=msword

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB89 - Teacher Housing Assistance Program

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Tes Kaulia, and I am a teacher on the beautiful island of Molokai. I am writing to express my strong support for HB89, which seeks to establish a Teacher Housing Assistance Program and provide housing vouchers for educators in our communities.

As a dedicated teacher, I am passionate about providing the best education possible for my students. However, one of the most significant challenges we face on Molokai and all across the State of Hawai'i is the high cost of housing. Many teachers struggle to find affordable and suitable living arrangements, which can lead to stress and distraction from our primary mission: educating our children.

The Teacher Housing Assistance Program proposed in HB89 would be a game-changer for educators like myself. By providing housing vouchers, we could alleviate some of the financial burdens that come with living in an area where housing costs are often prohibitively high. This support would not only help attract and retain quality teachers but also ensure that we can focus on our students and their educational needs rather than worrying about our living situations.

Furthermore, investing in our teachers' housing stability is an investment in our students' futures. When educators are secure in their homes, they are more likely to be present, engaged, and committed to their work. This stability allows us to build stronger relationships with our students and their families, fostering a positive and enriching learning environment.

I urge you to consider the profound impact that HB89 can have on the teaching profession in our communities. By supporting this legislation, we can take a significant step toward ensuring that our educators have the necessary resources to thrive both personally and professionally. Ultimately, this will lead to a brighter future for our students and our island.

Thank you for your attention to this crucial matter. I wholeheartedly support HB89 and encourage you to pass this bill for the benefit of teachers and students alike.

Sincerely,

Tes Kaulia

P.O. Box 461

Hoolehua, Molokai, HI 96729

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 6:29:02 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joyce Haase	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha State of Hawai'i House of Representatives,

I am writing in support of HB 89. This bill was written in response to the dire need for affordable housing for skilled, certificated teachers. Without adequate housing, schools have difficulty with recruiting and retaining qualified and caring teachers. Please fund and pass this measure to provide housing vouchers to selected teachers as a way to help with the expensive nature of housing in Hawai'i.

On some islands the Department of Education manages "teacher's cottages" that are older and expensive for the HDOE to maintain. By providing an additional teacher housing voucher system, it offers another option of support and evens the playing field for selected school teachers. The intention of this bill is to provide temporary assistance to teachers hoping it will help them remain teaching at a Hawaii school even among a competitive housing market.

I am writing as an individual and I am writing as a 15 year teacher on the island of Molokai. Please support HB 89. Mahalo for your time.

Joyce Haase

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:30:43 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
davina akau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill, teachers should be supported in their job and out of their job. because they are humans too.

they are the people who educate our kids

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:33:02 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liliana Ortogero	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is great for teachers. Teachers' pay causes the lack of educators in the islands. The pay is so low that nobody wants to be a teacher. If the housing cost for teachers decreases, the amount of teachers in Hawaii will increase.

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:38:48 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Ing	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I am in support of HB 89 because Hawaii suffers from a teacher shortage. Making housing options available to more teachers would draw or attract more teachers to Hawaii. Having more teachers here might mean we'd have smaller class sizes and a better teacher to student ratio. Mahalo!

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:38:49 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Braeden Holt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha I am in support of HB 89 because Hawaiiin suffers from a teacher shortage. Having more teachers here means having small classes

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:40:14 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michaela Williams	Halau Ku	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I support the hb of 89 because Hawaii suffers from a lack of good education in some schools. Hawaii's high cost of living and isolated location have made recruiting and retaining qualified teachers a long-term challenge for the state.

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:41:54 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
christian tang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha i am an eighth grader at Hālau Kū Māna i would really like if you guys could help hawaii with the teacher shortage

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:44:40 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julius Popoalii	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

I am in support because in Hawaii, we have a teacher shortage and we could provide houses for all the teachers. If we had more teachers we could split big classes in half so we could learn more.

Mahalo!

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:46:56 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Khailene	Halau Ku Mana	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I support this bill HB89, because we need more educated teachers to teach young ones for the future. If there isn't enough teachers not enough people can get educated.

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:47:53 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Makayla Holt	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

I am in support of HB89 because we have a shortage of teachers in Hawaii due to them having to focus on finding a home that isn't too expensive for them.

Mahalo!

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 10:57:49 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Logan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because that state of Hawi'i will provide housing for teachers

HB-89-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 11:28:17 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kamaluhaokahaloa Zablan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I support HB 89 because if there is more housing then there could be more teachers because we are having a teacher shortage here in Hawaii.

Mahalo