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**February 2, 2026**

**HB1592: RELATING TO ASSAULT**

**Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica and Members of the Committee on Education**

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD) **opposes HB1592**. The OPD supports protection of the safety and well-being of Hawai'i's educational workers and sports officials. Educational workers and sports officials should not be subjected to any verbal abuse or physical assaults. However, current statutes already provide sufficient penalties, including enhanced penalties, to punish persons who assault educational workers and sports officials.

HB1592 has several components.

- (1) It creates the offense of Aggravated Assault Against an Educational Worker or Sports Official (AAAEWSO) under Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), Chapter 707. This offense grades assaults against educational workers and sports officials one class or grade higher than the underlying offense. It also imposes a presumptive mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of thirty days although the court, at its discretion and upon the finding of specified factors, may impose a lesser minimum term or suspend the presumptive minimum term.
- (2) It creates definitions in the proposed AAAEWSO statute – “habitual offender against educational workers or sports officials” and “school-sponsored activity.”

- (3) It amends HRS § 706-605.6 (Assault Against a Sports Official) to add AAAEWSO to the enumerated offenses for which the court may enjoin the defendant from attending any sports event of the type at which the sports official was engaged.
- (4) It amends the definitions of “sports event” and “sports official” in HRS § 706-605.6.
- (5) It creates definitions related to AAAEWSO in HRS § 707-700 – “educational worker,” “lawful discharge of the sports official’s duty,” “sports event” and “sports official.”
- (6) It amends HRS § 707-711(1)(e) and (n) to make changes consistent with the AAAEWSO.

**Existing statutes already provide enhanced penalties for assaults against educational workers or sports officials.**

The OPD understands the intent behind this measure however, it is unnecessary as current statutes already provide enhanced penalties and/or protections for educational workers or sports officials. HRS § 707-711(1)(e) and (1)(n) provide that a person who intentionally or knowingly causes bodily injury to an “educational worker” or “sports official” is guilty of assault in the second degree, a Class C felony. This is an enhanced penalty as intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing bodily injury to a person (absent any special status) is an assault in the third degree, a misdemeanor. HRS § 706-606.5 also allows persons who commits assaults or terroristic threatening offenses against sports officials to be enjoined from attending sporting events.

**Increasing the severity of punishment does little to defer crime**

The efficacy of creating the new offense of AAAEWSO presumes that potential offenders are aware of the new offenses and enhanced penalties for such conduct. The reality, however, is that increasing the severity of punishment is ineffective partly because “criminals” know little about the sanctions for specific crimes.

According to legislative analyst Ben Johnson in a January 2019 report, “[T]he state can raise the maximum penalty for an offense, but that does not necessarily change

the expectations of someone who might be considering committing a crime. If a person is weighing the benefits of committing a crime against the potential consequences of that act, it is the potential offender's actual belief about a likely sanction that matters.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Not all crimes involve a rational decision**

HB1592 further presumes that individuals considering committing a criminal act have an internal discourse whereby the individual weighs the various pro and cons – whether to follow through and commit the contemplated offense. The reality, however, is that many offenses are committed on a spur of the moment – a whim or sudden impulse.

In that same 2019 report, Mr. Johnson indicated, “[C]riminal acts may be driven by many factors. Many crimes take place when the offender is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Others occur in the ‘heat of passion’ when a person experiences a strong emotion. It makes logical sense that a model assuming criminals engage in a rational cost-benefit analysis before committing a crime would not accurately predict conduct by people with an impaired ability to think rationally.”<sup>2</sup>

Even if the individual possesses the correct and accurate information regarding the severity of offense, often times, in the heat of the moment, criminal offenses are committed without deliberation or insight. The reality is that HB1592 may have little to no effect on deterring assaults on sports officials.

The OPD supports protection of the safety and well-being of Hawai‘i’s educational workers and sports officials. Educational workers and sports officials should not be subjected to threatening or assaultive behavior in the course of their employment. However, educational workers and sports officials are already protected from such illegal conduct under current statutes for harassment, assault, and terroristic threatening, some of which provide enhanced penalties and protections for such conduct when the victim is a school worker or sports official.

True deterrence from threatening or assaultive behavior against educational workers or sports officials could be achieved by enhancing security at schools and sporting events and issuing verbal or written warnings on-the-spot of criminal consequences.

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<sup>1</sup> Ben Johnson, Do Criminal Laws Deter Crime? Deterrence Theory in Criminal Justice Policy: A Primer, MN House Research, p. 5, January 2019, available at <https://www.house.mn.gov/hrd/pubs/deterrence.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Id.

This would be a proactive approach to prevent threats or assaults from occurring or escalating, rather than imposing harsher penalties after an assault has already occurred.

HB1592 has a laudable purpose, but it is unnecessary and will likely not achieve its desired result. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



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

Date: 02/03/2026  
Time: 02:00 PM  
Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
Committee: EDN

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** HB1592, RELATING TO ASSAULT.

**Purpose of Bill:** Elevates criminal penalties for assaults committed against educational workers and sports officials, while preserving appropriate judicial discretion at sentencing.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 1592.

The Department supports HB1592, which provides increased protection for educational workers and sports officials by elevating criminal penalties for assaults committed against such persons.

The Department believes that ensuring the safety and well-being of school personnel is of the utmost importance. This bill recognizes the need to safeguard those who serve and support the Department's students each day. The Department commends the bill's focus on advancing safety protections and accountability.

The Department further commends the legislature's acknowledgement of Natalie Iwamoto and her dedication to keeping her school, students, and community safe. The Department is committed to continuing to do everything in its power to keep its staff and students safe.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 1592.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



MAKALAPUA ALENCASTRE, ED. D.  
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII  
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION  
(‘AHA KULA HO‘AMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>  
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1100, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

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FOR: HB 1592 Relating to Education  
DATE: February 3, 2026  
TIME: 2:00 P.M.  
COMMITTEE: Committee on Education  
ROOM: Conference Room 309 & Videoconference  
FROM: Ed H. Noh, Ed. D., Executive Director  
State Public Charter School Commission

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Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 1592** which strengthens protections for educational workers and sports officials by elevating criminal penalties for assaults committed against for educational workers and sports officials.

The Commission appreciates the efforts of the Legislature in ensuring that public charter schools and their employees are included in and protected by this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



## 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  
House of Representatives  
Committee on Education

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 3, 2026

H.B. 1592 — RELATING TO ASSAULT

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports H.B. 1592, which elevates criminal penalties for assaults committed against educational workers and sports officials, while preserving appropriate judicial discretion in sentencing.

Educational workers and sports officials dedicate their time and energy to ensuring that our children can participate in academics and athletics in a safe environment. They deserve to be able to do their work without fear for their safety. The most recent act of violence was against a school administrator after a basketball game earlier this school year. While tragic for sure, we hope the incident has compelled the DOE and legislature to realize greater criminal penalties are necessary to make these perpetrators think twice. We have sought passage of such legislation for years. Now is the time to stand up to protect these dedicated educational workers and sports officials.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1592.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randy Perreira'.  
Randy Perreira  
Executive Director



# HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819  
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**Osa Tui, Jr.**  
President

**Logan Okita**  
Vice President

**Cheney Kaku**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Andrea Eshelman**  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: **HB 1592 - RELATING TO ASSAULT**

Position: **Supports**

Hearing: **2/3/2026, Conference Room 309, 2:00pm**

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 **supports HB 1592 - Natalie's Law** - to enhance criminal penalties for assaults by habitual offenders against educational workers and sports officials and includes school property and private venues. The bill is named in honor of Natalie Iwamoto, the Moanalua High School athletic director who was recently attacked by a parent after a basketball game.

Since the pandemic, we've seen attacks on educational workers rise. According to a July 2024 article in Education Week, "57% of teachers now report that they are considering quitting or transferring specifically due to concerns about school climate and safety." Additionally, a Business Insider article from August 2025 shared that "26% of teachers reported experiencing physical violence from parents since the return to in-person school."

A school that is unsafe for a teacher or educational worker is, by definition, an unstable environment for a student. Protecting the worker is a prerequisite for protecting the learner. The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to support HB 1592.

Mahalo.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:04:12 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Boyer	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

## **TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1592 (2026)**

Aloha Chair and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Douglas Boyer, EdD, and I am the proud principal of Lāna‘i High and Elementary School. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB1592, also known as “Natalie’s Law.”

This bill is a critical and necessary step to strengthen protections for educational workers and sports officials across Hawai‘i. As the Legislature recognizes, educational workers and sports officials perform essential public and youth-serving functions supporting student safety, youth development, and community well-being. Yet, these individuals increasingly face threats, harassment, and physical violence while performing their duties, both on and off school grounds.

Unfortunately, I can attest personally that this is not an abstract concern — it is the reality in our schools today.

In the past five years alone, I have had to contact law enforcement three separate times due to serious threats and aggressive behavior directed toward me while serving as a school leader.

- I was confronted by an individual who held a stapler to my head in front of students, creating fear and trauma for everyone present.
- I was threatened with retaliation, including being told someone would “have their sons find me.”
- I endured repeated verbal harassment from an angry parent who continuously targeted and intimidated me over time — to the point that when this individual came onto campus, I had to hide in an office and call the Maui Police Department. Officers responded and cleared the area of the school to ensure safety for staff and myself.

No school leader, teacher, or employee should ever have to take measures like hiding to protect themselves simply to do their job.

In addition, in my supervisory role as school principal, I have been required to intervene in escalating situations to protect students, staff, coaches, and officials.

I have had to remove individuals from campus and contact law enforcement when people were verbally threatening school staff. I have experienced situations where parents have entered athletic practices yelling, confronting coaches, and creating unsafe environments for students.

At school athletic events, I have also had to remove spectators for harassing coaches and sports officials during competitions. In some instances, these removals required the involvement of the Maui Police Department, underscoring the seriousness of these confrontations and the escalating hostility toward school personnel and volunteers.

Beyond campus, educators are too often subjected to continued intimidation in the community. Teachers in our schools have reported being verbally harassed by parents in public spaces such as the grocery store, at the beach, or at the park — while simply trying to tend to personal matters away from school. This highlights the reality that for many educational workers, harassment does not end when the school day ends.

These escalating incidents are not only harmful in the moment — they are contributing to a growing crisis in our educational system. Increasing threats, harassment, and violence toward school employees are leading many educators to leave the profession entirely, and they discourage qualified individuals from entering the field. This unsafe climate is a reason to the rising number of openings and shortages across schools in the United States. If we want to maintain stable, high-quality learning environments for students, we must ensure that educators and school staff are protected and supported through meaningful accountability measures such as HB1592.

In addition to threats and harassment directed toward educators, I have also experienced situations in which community members have made threats to come onto campus and harm students. When threats escalate to the level that student safety is at risk, the impact is immediate and far-reaching. Schools are forced into emergency response actions, families are frightened, and students experience fear and trauma in the very place that should feel safest.

I strongly believe that legislative protections should also recognize that assaults and threats against educational workers are often inseparable from threats against the children and young people we are entrusted to protect. Explicitly including student safety in the language and intent of this bill would further strengthen Hawai‘i’s commitment to secure learning environments.

I respectfully urge the Legislature to consider whether protections in this area should also expressly include threats or assaults that endanger students, since harm toward educators often places entire school communities at risk.

These incidents do not occur because educators are seeking conflict — they occur because we are fulfilling our responsibility to maintain safe learning environments, uphold expectations, and protect Hawai‘i’s keiki.

HB1592 provides appropriate accountability by creating the offense of aggravated assault against an educational worker or sports official, and by elevating criminal penalties when such assaults

occur during the performance of official duties or in connection with school-sponsored activities or sports events.

I would also strongly suggest that when an assault or threat against an educational worker causes a school to divert from its normal everyday operations — such as initiating a lockdown, placing the campus on a hold, or requiring other emergency safety actions — this conduct should rise to at least a felony-level crime. These incidents do not only impact the targeted staff member; they create traumatic experiences for entire classrooms, disrupt learning, and place students and staff into fear and crisis mode. When violence or intimidation reaches the level that a school must activate emergency procedures, the consequences should reflect the seriousness of the harm inflicted on the whole school community.

I strongly believe that when someone assaults an educator, coach, or sports official in the course of their duties, it should be treated as more than a minor offense. Violence against those entrusted with supervising children and maintaining school safety should be met with felony-level accountability. Such actions deserve penalties that reflect the seriousness of the harm and serve as a clear deterrent.

Natalie's Law sends a clear message: Hawai'i values those who serve our youth, and violence or intimidation against them will not be tolerated.

Our schools and athletic events must remain places of growth, learning, and community — not environments where educators, coaches, officials, or students fear harassment or harm.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB1592 and provide stronger protections for all educational workers, sports officials, and the school communities they serve.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,  
Douglas Boyer, EdD  
Principal, Lāna'i High and Elementary School  
Date: February 2, 2026

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

KEITH HAYASHI  
SUPERINTENDENT



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Kāne'ohe Elementary School  
45-495 Kamehameha Highway  
Kaneohe, HI 96744  
Phone 808-305-0000 • Fax 808-235-9185

**Date:** 02/03/2026  
**Time:** 2:00 PM  
**Location:** 309  
**Committee:** Education

**Department:** Education  
**Person Testifying:** Derek Minakami, NBCT, Principal of Kāne'ohe Elementary School  
**Title of Bill:** HB1592 RELATING TO ASSAULT  
  
**Position:** SUPPORT

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee

As a school principal, the safety of students and staff is my highest priority. When students feel safe, they are able to fully engage in learning and not be distracted by threats or fears. Likewise, when teachers feel safe, they are able to devote all of their attention to teaching and caring for their students and not unintentionally pass on anxiousness to their classes.

Sadly, today, teachers, administrators, educational assistants, and other educational workers face harassment, intimidation, and threats to their safety without any deterrent powerful enough to shelter them from harm. The assault suffered by Moanalua High School Associate Athletic Director Natalie Iwamoto highlights the elevated risk and real, lasting suffering we face. Regrettably, many other dedicated and effective educators endure repeated harassment outside of the headlines. They languish in our classrooms/schools/workplaces. Feeling exposed and without recourse, too many have left the profession, leaving behind the students, schools and system they once nurtured.

This bill provides accountability for those that assault educational workers. Further, it reinforces that schools, a haven for our most vulnerable populations, should be kept safe and free of harm.

Mahalo for your consideration of this request.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:47:37 AM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean Wong	DOE Hawaii- Roosevelt High School; OIA President: HHSAA Executive Board Member	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1592, which seeks to extend critical legal protections to educational workers and sports officials. These individuals are the backbone of our communities, providing mentorship, instruction, and structure for our youth, yet they are increasingly subjected to unacceptable levels of hostility. From the classroom to the playing field, instances of harassment, threats, and even physical violence have become alarmingly common. By strengthening penalties for assaults against these essential workers—whether at school-sponsored activities or privately organized amateur events—this bill sends a clear message that abuse against those who serve our children will not be tolerated.

Passing this legislation is essential not only for public safety but also to preserve the viability of education and youth sports in our State. If we want to ensure that our youth continue to have access to organized athletics, we must protect the people who make those opportunities possible. I urge you to pass HB 1592 to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all educational workers and sports officials.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 11:26:19 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah K Namohala (Kalei)	Waiakea High School Athletics	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is D. Kalei Namohala and I am an athletic director for Waiakea High School. I am writing today to express my **strong support** for **HB 1592**, also known as "Natalie's Law."

As a member of the athletic community, I've spent a lifetime playing, coaching and being an athletic trainer then administrator in sports.

We need to hold parents and spectators accountable for their behavior at high school athletic events. High school sports are educational-based programs, designed to teach teamwork, respect, discipline and sportsmanship. Participation in sports is an extension of the classroom - a place where our students-athletes learn life lessons through competition and community involvement.

When adults fail to model positive behavior, it undermines the very values athletics are meant to teach. Holding parents accountable isn't about punishment. Rather, it's about preserving a safe, respectful environment where students can learn and thrive.

We stand with the intent of Natalie's Law to ensure our athletic fields, gyms and courts remain a positive learning environment for everyone involved.

This legislation is a critical step forward for the safety and well-being of our community. By passing HB 1592, the legislature demonstrates a commitment to justice and the protection of those who have been harmed. I also hope this committee will consider the importance of related measures, such as [SB 2900](#), which provides essential legal counsel to victims.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. I urge the committee to pass HB 1592.

Mahalo,

D. Kalei Namohala (WHS Athletic Director -808 480-3211)

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:06:56 AM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joel Kawachi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1592 – NATALIE’S LAW****House Bill 1592  
Relating to Sports Officials and School Athletic Administrators**

**Tuesday, February 3, 2026 | 2:00 PM  
Conference Room 309**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Joel Kawachi**, and I serve as the Athletic Director at **Moanalua High School** in Honolulu. I am submitting testimony in strong support of House Bill 1592, also known as **Natalie’s Law**.

This bill is both timely and necessary.

Athletic administrators, coaches, officials, and school personnel routinely place themselves in emotionally charged environments—games, competitions, and events where tensions can run high. While passion is part of sports, **violence and threats are never acceptable**, yet they are becoming increasingly common. When these incidents occur, the individuals targeted are simply doing their jobs—serving students, schools, and communities.

Natalie’s Law recognizes a critical reality: **when school athletic personnel or officials are assaulted or threatened in the lawful performance of their duties, the impact extends far beyond the individual**. These acts undermine safety, deter qualified professionals from serving, and ultimately harm student-athletes and school programs statewide.

This legislation provides two essential protections:

1. **It clearly affirms that athletic administrators and sports officials are protected persons under the law, and**
2. **It authorizes legal support for those who are assaulted or threatened while carrying out their official responsibilities.**

As an Athletic Director, I have a responsibility not only to students, but also to the coaches, officials, and staff who serve them. No one should have to choose between their personal safety and their commitment to education-based athletics. Natalie's Law sends a clear message that **Hawai'i values and protects those who serve our youth.**

I would also like to express appreciation for the Legislature's broader commitment to this issue, including **Senate Bill 2900**, which has already passed first reading in the Senate. Together, these measures demonstrate a unified effort to address a growing concern and ensure meaningful protections across our education and athletics systems.

I respectfully urge you to **pass HB 1592** and continue advancing legislation that prioritizes safety, accountability, and respect for those who serve in our schools and athletic programs.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued leadership on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Joel Kawachi**  
Athletic Director  
Moanalua High School

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:13:39 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Todd	Todd Oshima, Moanalua High School	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I strongly support this bill as a teacher at Moanalua High School, we have seen firsthand the effects of violence in our public schools.



## UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Rep. Justin Woodson, Chair

Rep. Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 2:00 PM  
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

**Re: Testimony on HB1592 – RELATING TO ASSAULT**

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties.

UPW **strongly supports** HB1592, which elevates criminal penalties for assaults committed against educational workers and sports officials, while preserving appropriate judicial discretion at sentencing.

Given recent events and the rise in incidents of harassment and physical violence targeting educational workers and sports officials, it seems evident, unfortunately, that legislation like this is necessary to protect the rights and dignity of the individuals who are dedicated to student safety, youth development, and community well-being.

This bill attempts to address this growing issue by strengthening protections for educational workers and sports officials and ensuring that our community understands that this type of abusive behavior will not be tolerated in Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Keith Amemiya  
P.O. Box 3590  
Honolulu, HI 96811

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 309 and Videoconference

In consideration of

HB 1592

RELATING TO ASSAULT (Natalie's Law)

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee on Education:

I'm Keith Amemiya, former Executive Director of the Hawaii High School Athletic Association and current Chair of the Governor's Sports Task Force and Senior Vice President at Central Pacific Bank, and I strongly support HB 1592, which further protects sports officials and educational workers performing their duties at youth and amateur athletic events.

As the HHSAA's Executive Director for 12 years and continuing to be heavily involved in high school and youth sports since then, I've seen far too many incidents of verbal abuse, threats, harassment, and assaults of our valued and essential officials, administrators, school employees, and volunteers at sports events.

Sports officials and educational workers are the lifeblood of high school and youth sports, and we're already facing a shortage of both. Without them, we will no longer have high school and youth sports.

Therefore, HB 1592 will provide much needed protection for these essential workers.

As for Natalie Iwamoto, it would be fitting to have this bill named after her.

I hired Natalie out of college as my Assistant at the HHSAA and we've been colleagues and friends since. Her career long dedication to Hawaii high school sports is unmatched, as is her courage, bravery, fortitude, and conviction to always do what's right.

Enough is enough. We all need to take a stand against violence, threats, and abuse in high school sports.

Based upon the above, I humbly ask for your support and to pass HB 1592.

Please let me know if you have any questions and mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Keith Y. Amemiya  
Former Executive Director  
Hawaii High School Athletic Association



## Hawaii High School Athletic Association

P.O. Box 11419 | HONOLULU, HAWAII 96828

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[www.hhsaa.org](http://www.hhsaa.org) | Social: @HHSAASports

February 1, 2026

### **Testimony in Support of H.B. 1592, Relating to Assault**

The Hawaii High School Athletic Association (“HHSAA”) supports H.B. 1592, legislation that raises criminal penalties for assaults against educational workers and sports officials. At the same time, this bill maintains judicial discretion during sentencing and allows courts to consider the circumstances of each case.

Hawaii is currently experiencing a significant shortage of individuals willing to serve as sports officials. This shortage is related to inappropriate and unacceptable behavior by fans, which is frequently observed at high school sporting events. For example, during last week’s state soccer tournament, I witnessed instances of verbal abuse and hostility towards officials. Such conduct discourages individuals from becoming or remaining officials.

Unless the legislature acts to support sports officials and educational workers, high school athletic events will suffer. Leagues have shortened their seasons due to the lack of available officials. Immediate action is needed to demonstrate support for these essential individuals and avert further disruption to high school sports.

HHSAA respectfully requests that the definition of “educational worker” in H.B. 1592 is expanded to explicitly include the HHSAA and its member leagues: the Big Island Interscholastic Federation, the Interscholastic League of Honolulu, the Kauai Interscholastic Federation, the Maui Interscholastic League, and the Oahu Interscholastic Association. These organizations are responsible for sanctioning and operating all high school athletic events throughout Hawaii.

However, all of their employees are not covered under the current definition of “educational worker” because they are not employed directly by the Department of Education or by any private, public, or charter school.

HHSAA employees have experienced threats, harassment, and bullying while upholding officials’ decisions and performing their job duties. Employees of the member leagues face the same challenges. HHSAA urges that the protections provided by this Bill be expanded to include these individuals.

Thank you for considering this testimony in support of H.B. 1592.

*Christopher Chun*

Christopher Chun (Feb 2, 2026 09:15:00 HST)

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Christopher Chun, Executive Director

### **About the HHSAA**

Founded in 1956, the Hawaii High School Athletic Association is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) educational athletic organization exclusively dedicated to serving 98 public and independent member high schools statewide, as they work cooperatively to support and promote athletics as part of the high school education program. As the umbrella organization of high school athletics, the HHSAA operates 52 state championships in 23 different sports, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, in addition to providing professional development opportunities for coaches and athletic administrators.

# For Immediate Release Telephone: (808) 587-4495

Final Audit Report

2026-02-02

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**Written Testimony of Carlos A. Santana  
Local Sports Official for Basketball and Softball**

**February 1, 2026**

**Prepared for the Hawai'i State Legislature – Education Committee**

**For consideration of HB1592: Relating to Assault against  
educational workers and sports officials**

**Proponent Testimony**

My name is Carlos A. Santana and I am a sports official for basketball and softball in Hawai'i. I fully support HB1592, and encourage all legislators to support it as well.

News headlines remind us that sportsmanship is on the decline and that some fans, coaches, and players are behaving in unacceptable ways at sporting events. It seems that fans, coaches, and players sometimes think that their participation fee or admission ticket gives them the right to verbally abuse officials. In some cases, this abuse escalates to physical action. This was demonstrated on December 4, 2025. On that day, a parent physically assaulted Natalie Iwamoto, a Moanalua Assistant Athletic Director, following a basketball game while she was escorting the game officials to their vehicles. It's time to put an end to such thinking.

Most states have adopted various forms of legislation.<sup>1</sup> The advantages and benefits of having specific statutory law dealing with attacks on educators and officials are substantial. The existence of a state law criminalizing an attack on an official, communicates to the judiciary that such unacceptable behavior is to be taken seriously – that it is not tolerable to assault a school administrator or referee if you don't like a decision that he or she makes.

Increased penalties should serve as a deterrent. Certain segments of the public deserve and need special protection due to the nature of their jobs – police officers, firefighters, teachers, etc.

Sports officials represent the only authority on the field or court with license to adjudicate the action during the game. To ensure safety and fair play, officials must be confident they can enforce the rules and administer the sporting event without inappropriate reprisal. HB1592 takes a significant and proper step to increase protection for educators and sports officials in Hawai'i.

High school athletics is part of the high school education. Proper sportsmanship is just one lesson that must be absorbed by the student-athletes. These students will emulate the actions of the adults. Participating adults must be role models and display proper behavior. When adults place the blame for a loss or poor performance on the officials, they are denying the child the educational experience of dealing with and overcoming adversity.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.naso.org/resources/legislation/sports-officials-legislative-scorecard/>. Accessed January 30, 2026.

We must work together now to show these students the importance of proper sportsmanship and the value of competition, goal-setting, and perseverance. I think we can agree that without sports administrators and officials, these educational extracurricular programs would not be possible.

Sportsmanship is also a major issue impacting the recruitment and retention of officials. An unsafe working environment creates conditions that drives current and prospective people from the officiating profession/avocation. In 2023, almost 80 percent of officials reported taking on more assignments due to a shortage of officials.<sup>2</sup> Most officials love their sport and officiate to give something back to the game that provided them with their own lessons during their youth. They make huge sacrifices of time and money to train and travel to meetings and games. Unsafe working conditions create a reason for far too many officials to exit the game they love.

A few years ago, the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) undertook the largest survey of sports officials in history. Over 35,000 officials nationwide participated in the survey through a questionnaire.<sup>3</sup>

Here are some key statistics from the survey for your consideration while debating and considering this bill:<sup>4</sup>

- 64 percent of officials have removed a spectator from the court or field for poor behavior.
- 57 percent of officials have had to step in to break up a fight or skirmish during a game.
- Close to six percent of sports officials have been assaulted during or after a game by a fan. Almost five percent have been assaulted by a player and 2.5 percent by a coach. That's unacceptable.
- 53 percent of officials have felt unsafe or feared for their safety due to the behavior of an administrator, player, coach or spectator.
- 47 percent of male respondents and 44 percent of female respondents reported having felt unsafe or feared for their safety because of administrator, coach, player, or spectator behavior.

Of Hawai'i respondents, 57 percent of officials believe sportsmanship is getting worse.<sup>5</sup>

I fully support HB1592, and encourage all legislators to support it as well. This legislation not only supports the role that educators and sports officials play in our society today in a positive manner, but also establishes an example for other states to emulate.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.naso.org/survey/portfolio/shortage-post-pandemic-2023/> Accessed January 30, 2026.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.naso.org/survey/portfolio/data-highlights-2023/> Accessed January 30, 2026.

<sup>4</sup> Written Testimony of Barry Mano, President of the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) March 31, 2021. Prepared for the Connecticut General Assembly, Judiciary Committee. For consideration in S.B. 1088: An Act Concerning Assault of a Sports Official.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.naso.org/survey/portfolio/sporting-behavior-2023/>. Accessed January 31, 2026.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:22:30 AM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessy Shiroma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

As a fellow female teacher who works at the same school Natalie Iwamoto is employed at, I think Natalie's law is crucial for everyone's safety. What happened to her with Mr. Noga (who is my former student's parent) could've happened to any one of us, which is horrifying and unacceptable. She should not be in the position she is in right now and I'm so sorry to her that this ever happened and that it came to all of this.

More protection and protocol protecting specifically schools staff needs to be in place to ensure safety. No one should go to work anywhere with even the smallest inkling that their safety or life might be in danger... especially from the people who you set out to help.

Sometimes people think supporting school faculty and staff means buying them a starbucks giftcard for teacher appreciation week, etc. That's nice, I guess. But as everyone at this hearing already knows, what really helps people and creates actual change is policy and action. Passing this bill supports the idea that Hawai'i's communities and people believe in and support the safety of school and athletic staff, who dedicate their lives to helping keiki succeed. This is the right thing to do.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 12:53:30 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erik Estabilio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Chairperson, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Erik Estabilio, and I am a teacher working in Hawai‘i’s public education system, with 11 years of experience. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 1592, a coordinated and necessary set of measures that meaningfully address the growing problem of harassment and assault against educational workers.

Educational workers across Hawai‘i are increasingly subjected to harassment, threats, and physical assaults while performing their professional duties. These incidents occur in classrooms, offices, hallways, gyms, and school grounds—and too often they are minimized, inconsistently addressed, or treated as an unavoidable part of the job. They are not.

**HB 1592** appropriately recognizes that harassment which disrupts or interferes with the operation of schools and school administration directly undermines public education. Elevating harassment against educational workers to a misdemeanor reflects the seriousness of the harm inflicted—not only on the individual worker, but on the learning environment as a whole.

**HB 1888** further strengthens protections by elevating criminal penalties for assaults committed against educational workers, while preserving judicial discretion at sentencing. This balance is critical. It sends a clear message that assaults on educational workers are unacceptable, while still allowing courts to consider individual circumstances. Importantly, it acknowledges that educational workers, like other protected professionals, deserve recognition under the law for the unique risks inherent in their work.

**HB 1825** addresses a long-standing gap by requiring the Department of Education and public charter schools to properly report incidents of harassment and establish clear procedures for handling them. Without consistent reporting and transparent processes, patterns of abuse go unaddressed, and workers are left without recourse or protection. This bill is essential to accountability, data-driven prevention, and institutional responsibility.

Together, these bills affirm a basic principle: educational workers have the right to a safe workplace. Protecting educators and school staff is not at odds with supporting students—it is foundational to it. When workers feel unsafe, unsupported, or silenced, the entire school community suffers.

These measures are not punitive in nature. They are preventative, protective, and overdue. They help set clear expectations for behavior, establish consistent responses to serious incidents, and ensure that violence and harassment in schools are not normalized or ignored.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB 1592, and to stand with Hawai‘i’s educational workers. Ensuring their safety, dignity, and protection is essential to the stability and success of our public education system.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Erik Estabilio  
Teacher  
Moanalua High School  
Honolulu, Hawai‘i

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:13:01 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kapua Adams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

As an educator in the Hawai'i DOE, I strongly support this bill and having enhanced protections for educators and athletic staff against assault in the course of their work.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:32:58 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryce Kaneshiro	Oahu Interscholastic Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Oahu Interscholastic Association (OIA) stands in strong support of HB 1592. Our organization recognizes and commends the educational workers and sports officials whose dedication ensures that Hawaii's student-athletes receive a safe and fulfilling high school athletic experience.

HB 1592 addresses this issue directly by affording these individuals heightened protections within the justice system, providing a necessary legal recourse when spectator conduct becomes dangerous or uncontrollable.

A recent incident of physical assault against an educational staff supporting athletic events underscore the necessity of this measure. These workers are essential to the operation of school programs; they deserve the full protection of the law to safeguard them against violent threats and physical harm.

The OIA believes that HB 1592 will serve as a vital deterrent to misconduct, fostering a culture of respect and safety that allows our student-athletes to thrive. We respectfully urge the committee to pass this measure.

Bryce Kaneshiro

OIA Executive Director

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 9:46:23 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsay Chambers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the committee:

I submit this testimony in support of HB1592.

Educators, coaches and referees often serve as volunteers and regularly step into emotionally charged situations, particularly in youth and school sports. In recent years, high-profile incidents have shown time and again that harassment and violence toward sports officials and educational workers is a real and recurring problem.

We never want to see what happened at Moanalua High School happen again. This bill matters because it clearly sends the message that violence against those who serve and protect our youth is unacceptable and that accountability matters.

Mahalo to Representative Garrett for his thoughtful and timely leadership in drafting and introducing this bill in response to the real concerns facing our school and sports communities.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 5:42:12 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

1592 HB RELATING TO ASSAULT.	EDN	309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE	Feb 3, 2026 2:00 PM
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**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:27:08 AM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kylee Yamamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1592.

Thank you!

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:56:54 AM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ross Isokane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I support this bill. There's been a bad trend for years now where parents are getting more aggressive thinking they need to stand up for their kid in each and every situation. Everyone is so quick to outrage these days even (even for stuff that's clearly manini). Parents like this need to be checked and put in their place.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 12:31:36 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Darnell Domingo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 1592**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 1592, also known as "Natalie's Law." This bill is a necessary step in protecting the people who dedicate their time to our children's education and athletic development.

Why I Support This Bill:

- Protection for Educators: Teachers and school staff deserve a safe environment. Elevating penalties for those who assault educational workers sends a clear message that violence in our schools will not be tolerated.
- Mandatory Accountability: I strongly support the inclusion of a 30-day minimum jail term for offenders. Real consequences are the best way to deter future acts of aggression.
- Safety in All Youth Sports: I am particularly pleased that this bill protects sports officials—including referees, coaches, and volunteers—regardless of whether they are at a DOE event or a private youth league game. Our community volunteers and officials are facing increasing harassment, and they need these protections to continue their vital work.

Violence against officials and teachers has led to a shortage of qualified people willing to serve in these roles. By passing this law, Hawaii can help ensure that sports and schools remain focused on growth and safety rather than fear.

I urge the Committee to pass HB 1592 to provide a safer environment for everyone serving Hawaii's youth.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,  
Darnell Domingo

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:07:56 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Oka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

My name is Andrea Oka, and I respectfully testify in support of HB1592, relating to assault.

HB 1592, also known as "Natalie's law, recognizes the essential role that educational workers and sports officials play in our schools and youth athletic programs and addresses the growing incidence of threats and violence these individuals face while performing their duties.

This measure appropriately strengthens protections for those who serve and support Hawaii's youth by elevating criminal penalties for assaults committed against them, while preserving necessary judicial discretion at sentencing. Such protections are vital for the safety of our school communities, help deter harmful conduct, and reinforce our commitment to maintaining secure environments for both students and adults entrusted with their care. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the House to pass HB1592.

Sincerely,

Andrea Oka

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:24:04 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Courtney Chun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I strongly support this bill.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:50:20 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Shimoda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

It has been happening on a regular basis. I work in High School Athletics, going 20+ years now, and I've experienced it first hand (harassment). We who work the afterschool hours are not protected. There are no school security guards after 4:30pm daily. Most of us close the school, 10pm. Who's to say a disgruntled parent doesn't wait until the end of practice/game to "jump" anyone they have a disagreement with, and with only minor consequences to their actions. Ohio has HB139 to protect their employees/officials. Make the punishment fit the crime. At least maximize punishment so we can feel safe.

Mahalo,

Cynthia Shimoda

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:14:39 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Balangitao	Maui Interscholastic League	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have known Natalie Iwamoto for over 20 years working with her when she was with the HHSAA, University of Hawaii and when she became an associate athletic director at Moanalua. She was always very pleasant and professional in dealing with people and student athletes alike. She did not deserve to get hit like that while doing her job. We need to send a message that violence will not be tolerated in education based athletics and stiff penalties should be implemented to protect our Officials, Teachers, Coaches, Athletic Directors and School Personnel. People need to be held accountable for their actions so the penalty should be substantial so that it never happens again. Mahalo!

Joe Balangitao Jr

Executive Director Maui Interscholastic League

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 3:58:03 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelli Yuen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB1592. Also known as "Natalie's Law".

As an athletic health care trainer in the public high school system, I work with athletes and their families daily. My counterparts and I also work closely not only with our coaches, but also our administrative staff and sport officials. We all strive to make sure that each event is as safe as possible for everyone involved. This doesn't just include the venues we use, but also includes the safety of our athletes, spectators, officials, and staff.

Since I started over 20 years ago, I have watched situations during and after events become more intense and potentially explosive. When they never really were before. I have watched situations occur or have been in situations where I feared for my own safety. Not just during events, but also long after the event has ended. And being that we do not have the luxury of security staff all the time, it has been necessary to have my head "on a swivel" and teach myself to be unnecessarily hyper aware while working certain events. Especially when there are really no repercussions for the person who commits the assault in any form.

What happened to Natalie should never have happened.

I am writing in support of this bill in the hopes that it will help make our events a safer space. I am hoping that it will make spectators think twice before acting on their impulses that may lead to situations like this.

Those of us who work these events do it because we love what we do. We should not have to worry about our personal safety while we do it.

The repercussions to the potential negative actions of spectators and others that this bill provides will help make our events a safer place for everyone. It will help bring us back to being able to enjoy watching our students athletes in their endeavors without the added worry of being assaulted on multiple fronts. It will help us get back to doing our jobs the way we were meant to. Which is to support and protect our student athletes, spectators, and each other so that we can all enjoy every moment.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:14:03 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Bentkowski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. I am speaking from first hand experience as a former DOE coach and current teacher that there has to be more protection for school officials, teachers, coaches and support staff through appropriate consequences and severe penalties for sports parents, families, fans and their supporters who cross the lines of decency, harassment, safety, law and order, etc.

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:24:35 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey Fujimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a current DOE teacher with over two decades of teaching, and the 2016 air rifle boys state champion head coach, i strongly support this bill.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:26:56 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

My colleague at Moanalua HS, **Natalie Iwamoto, Associate Athletic Director**, was the victim of an assault while carrying out her duties at school. It is clear that the state of Hawaii must strengthen protections for all school employees and athletic staff members from harm while doing their jobs. We need strong deterrents that are enforced and upheld in order to continue doing the jobs we do.

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:28:49 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryan Honda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support for bill HB1592. As an administrator who attends high school sporting events I have had to address rowdy, obnoxious, and aggressive spectator behaviors. There have been times where spectators have yelled back or questioned me while trying to calm them down. It has caused uncomfortable situations which has made situations for me to fear for my safety.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:39:58 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

I am writing in full support of the passing of HB1592. As an educator I have seen numerous times how family members of our school communities have become heated and confrontational. It is difficult for us to navigate the situation during these times, let alone thinking about what type of protections we would have or consequences those confronted us would have. Now as a current athletic administrator after seeing the recent events these concerns are even more apparent.

Unfortunately, we will never be able to fully stop these types of violent assaults and confrontations from happening but the passing of these types of bills will hopefully make people think twice. It will also assure they are punished to the full law if they do cross the line.

I ask for your full support in passing the bill so we can protect those that are protecting our young ones.

Mahalo

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:51:09 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
LeRoy Makekau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB 1592, also known as “Natalie’s Law.” The assault of Associate Athletic Director Natalie Iwamoto while she was carrying out her professional duties is deeply concerning and highlights the real risks faced by school employees and athletic staff. No one working to support students and maintain safe school environments should be subjected to violence while doing their job.

HB 1592 is a necessary step to strengthen protections and accountability when school employees or sports officials are assaulted in the course of their work. This bill honors Natalie Iwamoto’s experience and sends a clear message that violence against school staff will not be tolerated. I respectfully urge your support of this important measure to help protect those who serve our school communities across Hawai‘i.

Mahalo,

LeRoy Na'a Makekau

Fashion/Graphic Design Instructor

Moanalua High School

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

## **WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1592**

Name: Sage Hottendorf

Position: Basketball Official

Affiliations: Special Olympics Hawai‘i; State of Hawai‘i Basketball Officials (SAHBO); Hawai‘i State Basketball Officials Association (HSBOA)

Position on Bill: Support

My name is Sage Hottendorf, and I am a 25-year-old basketball official with experience officiating for Special Olympics, SAHBO, and HSBOA. I am writing today to express my strong support for HB1592.

This issue is personal and urgent to me. The increasing hostility directed at officials has made me seriously question whether I can continue officiating if meaningful protections are not put in place. Officials should enter the court focused on enforcing the rules and ensuring fair play—not worrying about harassment, threats, or physical harm. When officials fear for their safety, it threatens not only individuals, but the integrity and future of organized sports in Hawai‘i.

Recent incidents, including the Natalie Iwamoto case, have shocked the athletic community and clearly demonstrate that this is not a hypothetical concern. These situations should never occur, and they send a dangerous and discouraging message to officials at all levels of sport.

HB1592 directly addresses these concerns and offers a necessary step toward restoring safety, accountability, and respect for sports officials.

First, HB1592 would help deter abusive and violent behavior toward referees by making it clear that such conduct will not be tolerated. Stronger protections create safer environments and allow officials to focus on fair, consistent, and effective game management.

Second, protecting referees is essential to the sustainability of athletics statewide. Many leagues already struggle to recruit and retain officials due to fear of abuse. Without action, this issue will continue to worsen, ultimately harming athletes, teams, and the broader community.

I urge the committee to vote **YES** on HB1592 to help ensure the safety, respect, and longevity of sports officiating in Hawai‘i. Thank you for your time, consideration, and leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Sage Hottendorf

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:30:25 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Meehan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Individuals who assault our education workers or sports officials should receive appropriate sentences as the courts provide. **It is unacceptable that our teachers and sports officials are attacked by unruly individuals.** These people should suffer appropriate penalties and in selected cases, severe penalties, for such actions.

**Please support HB 1592.** Thank you.

Ted Meehan

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:07:55 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherrie Faildo-Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

Josh Green  
GOVERNOR

Keith Hayashi  
SUPERINTENDENT



**STATE OF HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL  
1120 NEHOA STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96822

February 2, 2026

To: Chairperson Rep. Woodsen  
Committee Members

My name is John Chung and I am the Athletic Director of Roosevelt High School. I have been involved with high school athletics for 44 years. 25 years as a coach and 19 years as an Athletic Director.

I strongly support HB1592 "Natalie's Law". It's time that more is done to protect educational workers, officials and coaches. Strengthening the law will help to deter individuals who continuously act out with inappropriate behavior. A strong message needs to be sent to these types of individuals because if nothing is done now, their behavior will only get worse.

What happened to Natalie was disgusting. That incident showed the mentality of some of the individuals that we have to deal with on a weekly basis. These types of individuals have no respect for anybody and the only thing that may deter them from exhibiting threatening and abusive behavior are strong laws to protect educational workers, officials and coaches.

Over the years, I've heard about and seen threatening behavior towards officials, coaches and educational workers. Many times, we brush off these incidents as part of the job. We do that because we're always thinking about the kids. By doing that, we sometimes inadvertently put ourselves in danger of being a victim of an assault. Natalie's incident brought that to light.

I humbly ask that you support HB1592. I really feel that that by a passing HB1592, it will send a strong message to the public that threatening and abusive behavior directed at educational workers, officials and coaches will not be tolerated.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my testimony.

Yours Truly,

John Chung  
Athletic Director  
Roosevelt High School

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:41:12 AM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Okano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Hawaii must protect athletic officials and school staff members.

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:23:02 AM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rhona Barbosa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:13:23 AM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nelson Chee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee,

As an Athletic Director at Kaiser High School, I strongly support the passage of HB1592, Natalie's Law. This legislation appropriately recognizes the essential role that educational workers and sports officials play in creating safe, positive, and meaningful experiences for our youth. Every day, coaches, referees, athletic staff, and school employees commit themselves to mentoring young people, teaching life skills, and fostering teamwork, discipline, and respect through education and athletics.

Incidents of harassment, intimidation, threats, and even physical violence are directed at those serving our students and athletes have been increasing at an alarming rate. When parents, spectators, or fans engage in abusive behavior whether verbal or physical, educational workers, coaches, referees, athletic staff, and school employees are often left without meaningful support or protection. Many are forced to endure constant insults, name-calling, and harassment simply for performing their duties. This behavior not only places individuals at risk, but also undermines the integrity of school athletics and discourages qualified professionals and volunteers from serving our school communities. When there are no clear consequences for this behavior, it is allowed to continue and escalate, creating a culture where abuse is normalized rather than addressed.

HB1592 sends a clear and necessary message: violence, threats, and intimidation have no place in our schools or youth sports. By strengthening protections while preserving judicial discretion, this legislation strikes a fair and balanced approach that prioritizes safety, accountability, and justice.

Passing HB1592 honors the legacy of Natalie Iwamoto and affirms our collective responsibility to protect those who dedicate their time, expertise, and passion to Hawaii's students. Our schools and athletic programs are strongest when respect, safety, and community values are upheld. Natalie's Law is an important and overdue step toward ensuring that those who serve our youth are supported, protected, and respected.

Respectfully,

Nelson Chee

Athletic Director

Kaiser High School

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**HB-1592**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:32:20 AM  
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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maggie Travers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.