



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: HB1825, RELATING TO THE HAWAII TEACHER
STANDARDS BOARD.

Purpose of Bill: Permits the Department of Education and charter schools to hire
unlicensed individuals as teachers on an emergency basis for five,
rather than three, years. Requires the Hawaii Teacher Standards
Board to adopt rules.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education supports HB 1825, which would update emergency hire policies to better reflect the realities of today's teacher workforce. Emergency hire teachers are often local community members who bring valuable subject-matter expertise, professional experience, and a strong commitment to Hawaii's students. While many are actively working toward full licensure, the current three-year limit can cut short their service before they are able to complete required coursework, exams, or other licensure steps - often due to factors outside their control. Extending or improving this pathway helps ensure classrooms remain staffed and students experience continuity in instruction.

Students benefit when educators are able to stay in classrooms long enough to build relationships, strengthen their practice, and contribute to school culture, especially in hard-to-staff schools and rural communities. HB 1825 maintains rigorous licensure standards while recognizing the structural barriers teachers face, such as testing availability, cost, and work-life constraints. By supporting steady, documented progress toward licensure, this bill protects instructional quality, improves retention, and ensures Hawaii's investment in recruiting and supporting educators results in stable, committed teachers for our students.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for HB 1825.



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Osa Tui, Jr.
President

Logan Okita
Vice President

Cheney Kaku
Secretary-Treasurer

Andrea Eshelman
Executive Director

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: HB 1825 – Relating to the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board

Position: Support

Hearing: Tuesday, February 3, 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 **supports** H.B. 1825 to help address the state's persistent teacher shortage. By extending the employment limit for emergency hires from three to five years, this bill allows schools to retain dedicated educators who are already established in their classrooms but may need additional time to complete the licensing process.

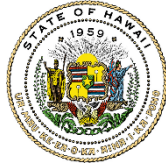
This change provides much-needed stability for students and schools without compromising professional standards. Completing a licensure program—which often includes student teaching and rigorous exams—is incredibly difficult while managing a full-time classroom workload. Under the existing law, a teacher who is performing well but has not completed every requirement by the end of their third year will be let go.

Extending the timeline will allow the education system to capitalize on the valuable experience an emergency hire has gained. It also helps circumvent the difficulties associated with vacant positions and the use of long-term substitutes.

H.B. 1825 maintains important protections by ensuring unlicensed individuals are only hired when no licensed teacher is available. It also preserves transparency through regular reporting to the board regarding the progress of these hires and the status of teacher shortages across the state.

By focusing on actual progress toward licensure rather than an arbitrary deadline, we can support the growth of our workforce and keep committed professionals in our schools. We respectfully urge the committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo.



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning

Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'āina
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

TO: Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair
House Committee on Education

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

SUBJECT: Testimony on H.B. No. 1825 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD.

Committee: EDN
Date: Tuesday, February 3, 2026
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Location: Conference Room 309

Executive Office on Early Learning's Position: **SUPPORT**

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) offers the following comments in support of H.B. 1825, a bill to extend the length of time the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) can employ emergency hire permit holders from three to five years.

This measure aligns with the Early Learning Board's current framework of policy priorities, which are grounded in the Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan. Specifically, the bill advances State Plan Building Block 4: Early Childhood Workforce, by providing additional flexibility to HIDOE, EOEL, and the Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission (HSPCSC) to meet the staffing needs of the public PreK system.

Thanks to the support of the Legislature, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and our Ready Keiki partners, the number of public PreK classrooms has grown rapidly over the last several years, more than tripling since 2022. Highly qualified EOEL and HSPCSC Public PreK teachers must have graduated from a State-Approved Teacher Education Program (SATEP) and hold a teaching license in Early Childhood Education, a unique set of qualifications for which there had been no significant demand prior to the expansion of the Public PreK program.

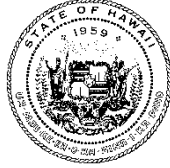
As the system adjusts to these new opportunities, some candidates encounter challenges obtaining an initial Early Childhood Education license due to the limited number of approved pathways and the timing of enrollment opportunities for existing programs. This is particularly

challenging for educators who already hold a Bachelor's or Master's degree in early childhood education from a non-SATEP program.

This bill directly addresses current bottlenecks while maintaining the expectation that all educators move toward full licensure. By maintaining a defined, time-limited permit structure and accountability for licensure progress, the bill responds to workforce realities, but limits the use of Emergency Hire Permits to time-limited bridges to full licensure—not parallel or permanent hiring pathways.

We continue to work with the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board and higher education partners to ensure that these pathways are responsive, while reinforcing the shared goal of a fully licensed, well-prepared educator workforce.

We appreciate the Legislature's ongoing investment and shared commitment to strengthening Hawai'i's early learning system for our youngest keiki and their 'ohana. Thank you for the opportunity to share these comments in support of H.B. No. 1825.



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD
650 IWILEI ROAD, SUITE 268
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

February 3, 2026

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

PERSON TESTIFYING: Felicia Villalobos, Executive Director, on behalf of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB)

DATE: February 3, 2025

TIME: 2:00 pm

LOCATION: Conference Room 309 and Video Conference

TITLE OF BILL: HB 1825 DOE; HTSB; Charter Schools; Emergency Hires; Rules

POSITION: Opposes HB 1825

Chair Woodson and Members of the House Committee on Education:

The Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) respectfully **opposes HB1825**, which would allow the Department of Education and public charter schools to employ unlicensed individuals as teachers on an emergency basis for **five years**, rather than the current **three years**, and requires HTSB to adopt related rules.

HTSB's position is grounded in our **Vision** of a highly esteemed public education system supported by rigorous professional teacher standards that foster student success, and our **Mission** to collaboratively set high licensing and credentialing standards that:

- Ensure every child in Hawai'i has a qualified teacher
- Promote professionalism and teaching excellence
- Build public confidence in the teaching profession
- Strengthen accountability to the public

Extending Emergency Hire Permits beyond three years directly conflicts with these commitments.

High-quality, equitable education depends on **well-prepared teachers** who are equipped to persevere and grow during their early years in the classroom. Research and experience show that teachers who enter through fast-track or alternative routes—particularly in urban districts—often begin underprepared and leave the profession at higher rates. Hawai'i's Emergency Hire Permit structure is designed to mitigate this by requiring individuals to pursue an **official teaching degree** within the three-year window.

To qualify for an Emergency Hire Permit, individuals must already hold a **bachelor's degree**. Completing a post-baccalaureate program or master's degree typically requires only one to two years—well within the existing three-year timeframe. Extending the permit to five years would allow individuals with any bachelor's

degree, even in unrelated fields such as fashion design, to teach for an extended period without completing essential pedagogical preparation.

This is especially concerning because Emergency Hire teachers are frequently placed in **elementary and special education classrooms**, where strong foundations in literacy, numeracy, differentiated instruction, and support for multilingual learners are critical. In some cases, students have had Emergency Hire teachers every year of elementary school. As we continue to address learning loss from the COVID-19 years, further lowering preparation expectations would compound existing challenges.

Other states that have reduced their qualification standards are now experiencing negative consequences from those policy shifts. Hawai'i should not follow that path. Doing so would be a disservice not only to our keiki, but also to individuals who aspire to become fully licensed, highly qualified teachers.

While Hawai'i faces significant teacher shortages—ranging from 1,000 to 1,200 vacancies at the start of each school year—**lowering standards is not the solution**. Instead, we should invest in strategies that strengthen the profession, including:

- Supporting teacher retention
- Expanding National Board Certified Teacher pathways
- Increasing mentoring and induction support, especially for those with Emergency Hire Permits
- Implementing a Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program with structured guidance and tuition support

These approaches uphold quality while addressing workforce needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. For the reasons stated above, the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board respectfully **asks the Committee to oppose HB1825**.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



MAKALAPUA ALENCASTRE, ED. D.
CHAIRPERSON

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

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

FOR:	HB 1825 Relating to the Hawaii Teachers Standards Board
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

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

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony with **COMMENTS on HB 1825** which allows the Department of Education and public charter school teachers to hire unlicensed individuals as teachers on an emergency basis for five, rather than three, years.

Though the efforts of the Legislature to address on-going teacher shortages are appreciated, the Commission defers to the Hawaii Teachers Standards Board on the impacts of this measure and its effects on teacher quality and student outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

Testimony of the Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights

In SUPPORT of HB1825

Relating to the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board

Hearing: Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 2:00 PM (EDN), Room 309 & Videoconference

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

My name is Liza Ryan Gill, testifying on behalf of the **Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR)**, a coalition of immigrant-serving and immigrant-led organizations working statewide to advance policies that protect immigrant and migrant communities and strengthen our shared future. HCIR respectfully submits this testimony **in strong support of HB1825**.

Hawai'i's public schools serve families from across the world. Statewide, **nearly 1 in 4 Hawai'i residents age 5+ speaks a language other than English at home**, and a significant share of our neighbors are foreign-born. These realities show up in every classroom: multilingual students, newly arrived families, and households navigating school systems while also navigating language barriers and cultural transitions.

HB1825 is a practical, student-centered response to chronic staffing shortages and the instability they cause. As the bill notes, forcing emergency hires out after only three years can create avoidable disruption for students and schools; extending the allowable period to **five years** can improve continuity, reduce churn, and keep trusted educators in place while they complete licensure steps.

From an immigrant rights perspective, we support HB1825 because it can:

- **Reduce classroom disruption that disproportionately harms immigrant and multilingual learners**, who often rely on consistent relationships and stable routines to thrive academically and socially.
- **Broaden the pipeline of educators**—including community members, multilingual educators, and internationally trained teachers—who may bring critical cultural and language knowledge into schools.
- **Support charter schools** (which often serve high-need communities and unique language/culture-focused programs) by giving them additional stability in hard-to-fill positions.



www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

We also appreciate that **HTSB is directed to adopt rules** for emergency hiring, which is important for transparency and accountability. Currently, HTSB describes the Emergency Hire Permit as valid for **1 year and reissuable up to a maximum of 3 years**; HB1825 would align policy with a longer runway for successful completion of licensing requirements.

To ensure this change benefits students and protects educators, HCIR urges that the HTSB rules and DOE implementation include:

1. **Clear, enforceable annual progress expectations** toward licensure that come with real support (paid release time for required coursework/tests when possible, mentoring, and clear guidance).
2. **Strong worker protections**—especially for teachers who are immigrants or on temporary visas—so that emergency status is not used to underpay, overwork, or threaten job loss in ways that discourage reporting concerns.
3. **Training in cultural responsiveness and language access** so emergency hires are equipped to partner effectively with multilingual families.
4. **Public reporting** (aggregated, non-identifying) on emergency hires by island/complex area, shortage subject areas, and retention outcomes—so the Legislature can track whether this policy improves stability over time.

For these reasons, the Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS HB1825**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

With gratitude,

Liza Ryan Gill
Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR)

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 2:00:51 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Reyes Oda	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:31:04 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane Aquino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

Thank you, Jane Aquino, Indivisible Hawaii and Hawaii J20

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:50:30 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Weltin	Kaʻu Voices-An Indivisible Chapter on the Island of Hawaiʻi	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of HB1825 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). House Bill 1825 would amend §302A-804 HRS, the existing program for the hire of teachers without a teaching certificate when there are no licensed teachers available to fill vacant positions. Section 302A-804 presently allows an emergency hire to work for no more than three years before completing the process of certification. The amendment would extend that to five years while continuing to work toward certification.

Hawaii has long had a shortage of teachers to fill the needs of public and charter schools. The existing emergency hire program has assisted schools in filling vacant teaching positions to the benefit of our students. These hires are required to work toward a teachers license while they are employed in the schools. There are times when a person has been taking steps toward obtaining a teaching license but have not completed the work in three years. Extending the time for completion will allow for better planning by administrators and strengthen ties to students and the community by uninterrupted instruction. I urge you to move HB1825 forward

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Elizabeth Weltin as an individual citizen and on behalf of Kaʻū Voices-An Indivisible Chapter and member of the Indivisible Hawaiʻi Statewide Network (IHSN)

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:11:09 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Goren	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB1825 personally, as a member of the Indivisible Hawai'i State Network (IHSN), and as a resident of Lahaina. House Bill 1825 would amend §302A-804 HRS, the existing program for the hire of teachers without a teaching certificate when there are no licensed teachers available to fill vacant positions. Section 302A-804 presently allows an emergency hire to work for no more than three years before completing the process of certification. The amendment would extend that to five years while continuing to work toward certification.

Hawaii has long had a shortage of teachers to fill the needs of public and charter schools. The existing emergency hire program has assisted schools in filling vacant teaching positions to the benefit of our students. These hires are required to work toward a teachers license while they are employed in the schools. There are times when a person has been taking steps toward obtaining a teaching license but have not completed the work in three years. Extending the time for completion will allow for better planning by administrators and strengthen ties to students and the community by uninterrupted instruction. I urge you to move HB1825 forward

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Danielle Goren

As part of the International Teachers here in Hawaii, my compatriots and I wholeheartedly serve our work as teachers to our students knowing that we share not only knowledge but love as second parents to them while they are at school. However, the need to prepare for multiple licensure exams while managing our teaching responsibilities places unnecessary stress on us and takes valuable time away from lesson planning and student engagement. As a teacher of young people with special needs, there are many subjects they must learn, especially the life skills that are important for them so that they can use them in their future life and so that they can have their own lives and abilities that expect nothing else but to be able to stand on their own feet. We teachers, although we teach a different race, our love for our work has not changed and our love for the students we teach is also there. We are also open to learning from our schoolmates as part of the Cultural Exchange Program and we are also ready to help as much as we can and learn the different methods and cultures that exist in the country of Hawaii. In my teaching now although it will take three to five years, I can say that my dedication to teaching will remain there no matter where I go not only the ability to share knowledge but to love my work, students and co-workers. My students today I can see, and I can tell that there is a change in them when it comes to cognitive, sociability, love for others and their readiness to stand on their own feet using their own abilities. I love my job, I love my School, I love my students and coworkers and most of all I love Hawaii so I am requesting the opportunity to continue teaching in Hawaii for up to five years under the Emergency Hire Permit. Teaching is my passion, and I promise to consistently provide the highest quality instruction. I am dedicated to instilling a love for lifelong learning in my students, particularly within my fully self-contained middle school classroom.

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 11:11:30 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ma. Belinda Calabucal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB1825 / SB2616 and HB1840 / SB2125**Submitted by: Ma. Belinda Calabucal****Position: J1 Teacher- Hawai'i DOE**

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

My name is **Ma. Belinda Calabucal**, and I am a J-1 visiting international teacher currently serving in a Hawai'i public school. I am writing from the heart to express my strong support for the measures relating to the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board, the extension of emergency hires, and the creation of an alternative pathway for a Visiting International Educator Permit aligned with the J-1 visa program.

Teaching in Hawai'i has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. Every day, I show up not only as a teacher, but as a mentor, a cultural ambassador, and a steady presence for my students. Many of them rely on consistency, trust, and relationships to thrive—and those things take time to build. When teachers are forced to leave too soon due to licensing barriers and rigid timelines, it is the students who feel the loss the most. And I personally would admit that I would deeply miss my students, particularly with the knowledge that the time given to be with them may be so limited.

As a J-1 teacher, the burden of meeting licensure requirements—particularly taking costly exams that require extensive preparation—can be overwhelming. These tests demand significant financial resources and time for review, all while we are teaching full-time, adapting to a new education system, and being far from our families. Much of our attention is taken by the urgent need to pass licensure exams, instead of allowing us to fully concentrate on our main goal of teaching and building meaningful cultural exchange. We are doing our very best, yet the pressure and uncertainty can be emotionally exhausting.

Allowing emergency hires for up to five years instead of three would give educators like me the gift of time—time to grow, to improve, to build strong relationship with our students and to fully serve our school communities without constant fear of having to leave before we are truly ready. It would also give our students the stability they deserve and allow schools to retain committed teachers who have already proven their dedication.

Equally important is the proposed alternative pathway for a Visiting International Educator Permit aligned with the duration of the J-1 visa. Cultural exchange is not something that happens overnight. It grows through shared stories, daily interactions, and long-term relationships. When we stay longer in one school, we are able to create deeper connections, foster mutual understanding, and truly live out the purpose of the J-1 exchange program.

These measures are not about lowering standards. They are about compassion, fairness, and recognizing the real challenges faced by international educators who give their hearts to Hawai'i's students. Passing these bills would allow us to continue teaching with purpose, stability, and hope—while strengthening our schools and enriching the cultural fabric of our communities.

Mahalo nui loa for listening to our voices and for supporting teachers who are deeply committed to the success and well-being of Hawai'i's students.

Respectfully,

Ma. Belinda Calabucal

J-1 Visiting International Educator

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:25:25 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jan Mariae Margaret Labadan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB 1825

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jan Mariae Margaret M. Labadan, and I am a J-1 teacher currently serving in Hawaii. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 1825, specifically the provision to extend the service period for J-1 teachers from three years to five years.

As a J-1 teacher, I see firsthand the value we bring to the classroom. We provide global perspectives, introduce innovative teaching methodologies, and offer critical support to students with diverse learning needs. We aren't just temporary staff; we are mentors, coaches, and integrated members of our school 'ohana.

However, the current three-year limitation creates a significant "revolving door" effect that hurts our schools:

- **Disrupted Continuity:** Three years is barely enough time to master a specific school's curriculum and build deep-rooted relationships with families. Just as we reach our peak effectiveness, we are forced to leave.
- **Student Impact:** Mid-cycle departures create instability for students who benefit from consistent, long-term mentorship.
- **Institutional Strain:** Hawaii schools spend considerable time and resources recruiting and training J-1 teachers. Expanding this period to five years ensures a much higher return on that investment and provides the stability needed for long-term strategic planning.

HB 1825 offers a vital remedy by allowing J-1 teachers to remain in Hawaii for five years. This extension allows us to fully invest in our students' growth and see them through critical developmental milestones.

Furthermore, I support the bill's efforts toward professional equity. Recognizing our globally recognized credentials by waiving repetitive Praxis exams and ensuring equal compensation through differentials reflects a respect for our professional status. It acknowledges that we are qualified experts dedicated to Hawaii's keiki.

Enacting HB 1825 is an investment in the stability of Hawaii's educational system. It allows us to stop focusing on the "ticking clock" of our visas and start focusing entirely on what matters: fostering student development and strengthening our school communities.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB 1825 to ensure that Hawaii's students have the consistent, high-quality educators they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

TESTIMONY ON [HB1825](#) - RELATING TO THE HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD.

Permits the Department of Education and charter schools to hire unlicensed individuals as teachers on an emergency basis for five, rather than three, years. Requires the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board to adopt rules.

TO: The House Committee on Education

FROM: Janica Mary Pogoy

POSITION: Second-Year J-1 Teacher, Lehua Elementary School

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

I am writing to express my **strong support for HB1825**, which proposes extending the emergency hire permit for teachers from three years to five years. I am a dedicated educator currently in my second year as a J-1 exchange teacher, and I am sharing my perspective to highlight the unintended obstacles the current three-year limit places on qualified professionals.

Professional Value and Preparation

I am a "full-fledged" Master's degree holder from the Philippines. I intentionally earned my advanced degree to prepare myself for the rigor of the American classroom and to share my culture with the community here in Hawaii. My transcripts were evaluated by nationally recognized agencies (such as SPANTRAN/CARREE) and deemed equivalent to U.S. standards. To be honest, it is frustrating that my Master's degree and evaluated transcripts don't seem to count for much when compared to the PRAXIS. I am a capable teacher, but this exam is a huge struggle for me. The current 3-year limit doesn't give us enough time to overcome this hurdle while also dealing with the high cost of living and the demands of our first years in a new country.

The Challenges of the 3-Year Timeline

The current three-year window creates an environment of high-pressure "survival" rather than professional growth:

- **Financial Burden:** Between the high cost of living in Hawaii and the expensive fees for the PRAXIS exams, the financial strain is immense.

- **Mental Health:** The pressure to pass multiple exams within a short window—knowing that our ability to stay and teach depends on it—is a significant burden on our mental well-being.
- **National Inconsistency:** Many of our colleagues teaching in the mainland U.S. are granted 5-year permits based on their evaluated credentials. We are simply asking for parity with our peers in other states.

The Goal: A Fair Path to Success

I'm not looking for a way around the standards—I truly value them. I'm just looking for a timeline that makes meeting them possible without burning out. We love these schools and these kids; they are the reason we're here. Many of us have big dreams to keep learning and growing professionally, but the 'three years or you're out' rule makes it feel like we're constantly racing against a clock. **It's hard to give my students 100% when I'm worried that my time here has an expiration date.**

By extending the permit to **five years**, you provide us with the necessary time to navigate the licensing process without the constant fear of displacement. It allows us to be the stable, high-quality educators Hawaii's students deserve.

I respectfully urge the committee to **pass HB1825** and support the teachers who have traveled across the world to serve the children of Hawaii and not just to us J1 but to all emergency hired teachers. WE ALSO MATTER.

Mahalo for your time and for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Janica Mary Pogoy

808-927-6685 | janicamarycartalla@gmail.com

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

My name is Mark Damo, and I submit testimony in support of this measure, which permits the Department of Education and charter schools to employ unlicensed teachers on an emergency basis for up to five years.

As a J-1 teacher currently serving in Hawai'i's public schools, I have firsthand experience balancing full-time teaching responsibilities while working toward licensure. The current three-year limitation creates significant challenges for educators in high-need positions. Extending the emergency hire period to five years provides a more reasonable and attainable pathway to licensure while maintaining continuity of instruction for students.

This measure supports stability in classrooms by reducing teacher turnover and ensuring students have consistent access to qualified and committed educators. Requiring the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board to adopt rules ensures appropriate oversight and accountability.

This bill represents a practical response to Hawai'i's ongoing teacher shortage and supports the educational needs of students statewide. I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully,

Mark Damo
J1 Teacher

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 4:33:44 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jayson Nucup	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly and wholeheartedly support this bill, which permits the Department of Education and charter schools to hire unlicensed individuals as teachers on an emergency basis for up to five years instead of three, and which requires the Hawai‘i Teacher Standards Board to adopt the necessary rules.

This measure will greatly benefit our schools by addressing the ongoing teacher shortage while ensuring continuity and stability in classrooms. Extending the emergency hiring period allows schools to retain committed and capable educators who are already serving students, rather than losing them due to licensing timelines beyond their control.

Students will benefit from consistent instruction, stronger relationships with their teachers, and fewer classroom disruptions. Teachers and school administrators will also benefit from increased flexibility and support as they work to meet staffing needs while maintaining instructional quality.

Overall, this bill provides a practical and thoughtful solution that supports students, empowers educators, and strengthens Hawai‘i’s public education system. I urge the Legislature to pass this bill.

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 5:03:15 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Teare	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for supporting this bill to assist in filling open postitions for educators in the State.

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 5:08:33 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorissa Gumotud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a J-1 teacher here in Hawai‘i, teaching is more than a job for me. It is a calling. Every day, I step into my classroom with the purpose of giving my very best to our keikis, not only academically, but also emotionally and culturally. We pour our hearts into building relationships, understanding our students’ needs, and creating a safe and nurturing learning environment where they can truly thrive.

Three years may seem like a long time, but in education, it is only the beginning. It takes time to fully understand the school culture, the community, and the unique needs of our keikis. By the time we have built strong connections, refined our teaching practices, and truly made a lasting impact, our time is already coming to an end.

We humbly ask for the opportunity to extend the J-1 teacher program to five years instead of three. This extension would allow us to continue giving consistent, high-quality instruction and to further contribute our skills, experience, and passion to our classrooms and school communities. We are eager to participate more deeply, share our expertise, collaborate with fellow educators, and grow alongside our students.

Our hearts are in this work. We are committed to serving our keiki, supporting our schools, and honoring the trust that families place in us every day. With more time, we can do even more—teach more, learn more, and give more.

Mahalo for considering our request and for allowing us the chance to continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of our students.

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 5:12:04 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Abegail L Toledo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of HB1825 relating to the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board. As an elementary teacher in Hawai'i, I believe this bill supports the professionalism, retention, and stability of educators, which ultimately benefits our students.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Abegail L. Toledo

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 5:48:03 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jezreel Baldonado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Jezreel Baldonado, and I am currently teaching in Hawai‘i under an emergency hire permit at a Title I public school. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB1825, relating to the Hawai‘i Teacher Standards Board and emergency hires.

I chose to teach in Hawai‘i because I believe in the importance of serving students who need stability, consistency, and committed educators the most. In my Title I school, many students face challenges beyond the classroom, and having a consistent teacher presence is critical to their academic growth, emotional safety, and sense of belonging. Through the emergency hire pathway, I was able to step into a classroom that might otherwise have remained unfilled, providing students with continuity rather than constant turnover or substitute coverage.

Teaching full time while actively working toward licensure is both meaningful and demanding. Emergency-hired teachers are expected to meet the same instructional responsibilities as fully licensed teachers while simultaneously completing coursework, assessments, documentation, and financial requirements tied to certification. For educators who come from out-of-state or international backgrounds, these requirements are often layered with additional transitions and adjustments. The current three-year limit does not always reflect these realities.

Extending the emergency hire period from three to five years offers a more realistic timeline that allows educators to focus on both high-quality instruction and steady progress toward licensure. This additional time is especially important in Title I schools, where teacher turnover disproportionately affects students who already experience educational inequities. Stability in staffing allows teachers to build strong relationships, refine instructional practices, and collaborate meaningfully with colleagues and families.

From my classroom experience, I have seen how students respond positively when they feel known and supported by a consistent teacher. Growth in engagement, behavior, and academic confidence takes time, and frequent teacher turnover undermines that progress. HB1825 supports student success by helping schools retain committed educators who are already serving their communities.

I strongly support HB1825 because it balances flexibility with accountability. Emergency hire permits should remain a supported pathway, with continued mentoring, professional development, and oversight through the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board. With clear expectations and structured support, this bill strengthens the teacher pipeline while maintaining high professional standards.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my experience and for your continued commitment to Hawai'i's students, educators, and public schools. I respectfully urge your support of HB1825.

Respectfully,

Jezreel Baldonado

Emergency-Hired Teacher

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Rep. Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 2:00 pm

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 309

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT - HB 1825 RELATING TO THE HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD.

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, Rep. Amato from Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews, and I live in Wailuku, Maui. I submit this testimony to you today in support of HB 1825 Relating to the Hawaii Teachers Standards Board. I am an attorney licensed in Hawaii for over 25 years. Early in my career I worked on gender equity in STEM as a workforce development issue for many years. I focused on issues in recruitment and retentions and wrote over ten peer-reviewed papers on best practices in the field.

One of the key workforce development areas I identified in my work with K-12 teachers and administrators and with professors and administrators of our institutions of higher education in Hawaii was the gaps in the education-to-workforce pipeline. This is an issue that we continue to see today when it comes to the education, recruitment and retention of teachers. Before attending law school, I attended the College of Education at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, concurrently with a subject matter Master's degree program, to obtain a professional degree in teaching. I actually completed the coursework and practicum for the professional degree in teaching, but, in order to get a teaching license, at the time, required a one-year, unpaid, teaching practicum with the Department of Education. I could not afford to work for free for a year, so I went to work in a different field which later led me to law school.

That someone like me, who worked full-time while pursuing both a subject-matter Master's degree and a professional degree in teaching should have switched course because of the barriers put in place to pursuing my desired career of teaching highlighted for me the education-to-workforce barriers between the College of Education at UHM and the Hawaii State Department of Education. While this bill does not address that particular barrier, and I would encourage the Committee to question the College and Department on that issue, it does address a corollary issue I also have personal knowledge of.

A friend of my daughter's is a fine young man with a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry from the University of California. He does not have a teaching degree, he has a subject-matter degree in chemistry. He wanted to explore teaching as a career, and applied as an emergency hire to teach science at Baldwin High School in Wailuku, Maui. In another sign of the dysfunction at the Department of Education, this young man was hired about one week before school started, although he had applied months prior. He had no classroom management experience, there were no curricular materials

provided, and yet, under the mentorship of the head of the Baldwin Science Department, he fully embraced his new job.

It was not without its bumps in the road, but I had the wonderful opportunity to witness him “find his calling.” He would come home from school almost every day and say, “I love my job!” He understood that, under the current law, he would need to get his teaching license within three years to keep this job that he loved. Unfortunately, because he was hired just before the school year started, it kind of interfered with his ability to register for teaching degree programs within the UH system. It is also hard to get a teaching degree within the UH system from a neighbor island. When the end of his first year teaching at Baldwin was complete, there was some difficulty for him in retaining his position, even though the head of the Science Department was leaving for another school, and there seemed that there would be no experienced science teachers there. Part of the barrier for him was that he was not yet enrolled in a teaching degree program, and the timing now for him to complete a UH-affiliated program would not work, so he enrolled in a more costly online teaching degree program out of state, rather than taking advantage of programs through the UH system he would have qualified for. This is how the current three-year limit for emergency hires can create a barrier for people who want to stay and teach as a profession in Hawaii.

It has been a great experience to witness someone who, like me, wants to pursue a teaching career here in Hawaii. We have chronic shortages of teachers, filled now with teachers on J-1 visas. It is important to have skilled, knowledgeable, professional teachers. I **request your support of HB1825** because it will allow people, especially neighbor islanders, with desirable subject-matter degrees a more appropriate amount of time to get their teaching degree so that they can remain in their schools, avoid them having to pay for expensive online programs instead of going through the UH system simply because of a shortage of time under the current law, and help build the pipeline of experienced teachers like my friend to provide an excellent education for our students.

Thank you for your time and for supporting teachers and students by supporting HB1825.

Mahalo nui,

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.
Wailuku, Maui

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:49:41 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martha Nakajima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Thank you. Martha Nakajima, Honolulu, member of Indivisible

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:55:49 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I would like to support this bill for the benefits of each party. Teachers would have a deeper experience and understanding about the culture and the program. In addition, it will help financially. The school however gets passionate teachers with expertise and fill up the missing needs of the school.

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:19:19 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you -- I am a member of Indivisible Windward.

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:56:38 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of HB1825 because I believe it will help us here in Hawai'i with our teacher shortage. Mahalo for your consideration.

02/02/2026

Committee on Education

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Rep. Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1825

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

My name is Alicia Hedlesky, a resident of Moloa'a, Kauai and a member of Indivisible Hawaii. I am writing to strongly support HB1825, which would alleviate the teacher shortage in Hawaii. As a former teacher, I understand the challenges to teachers and administration when positions go unfilled, and the harm this does to the students. Unlicensed hires are required to work toward a teacher's license while they are employed in the schools. There are times when a person has been taking steps toward obtaining a teaching license but has not completed the work in three years. Extending the time for completion will allow for better planning by administrators and strengthen ties to students and the community by uninterrupted instruction.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to testify on this important issue,

Alicia Hedlesky

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 3:36:16 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
DARNEL Q. COLOMA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Darnel, and I am currently a J-1 teacher teaching in Hawai‘i. I am submitting this testimony in support of the measure relating to the Hawai‘i Teacher Standards Board, the Department of Education, and charter schools.

As an international educator, I came to Hawai‘i to contribute my skills, experience, and commitment to student learning. Like many J-1 teachers, I was already a fully trained and licensed teacher in my home country, yet I still had to navigate Hawai‘i’s licensing process while teaching under an emergency hire. This process can be lengthy and complex, especially for international teachers who must meet additional requirements while adjusting to a new education system and community.

Extending the emergency hire period from three to five years would provide much-needed stability for schools, students, and teachers. In many schools—particularly those serving hard-to-staff areas—teacher turnover disrupts learning and places additional strain on remaining staff. Allowing qualified, dedicated educators more time to complete licensure requirements helps ensure continuity in the classroom and supports student success.

From my experience, emergency-hired teachers are not unqualified; many of us bring years of teaching experience, cultural knowledge, and strong professional commitment. With proper oversight and clear rules adopted by the Hawai‘i Teacher Standards Board, this measure can balance flexibility with accountability, ensuring that teacher quality remains a priority while addressing the ongoing teacher shortage.

I respectfully encourage your support of this measure. It recognizes the realities facing Hawai‘i’s schools while valuing the contributions of teachers—local and international—who are committed to serving Hawai‘i’s students.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your continued support of education in our state.

Respectfully,
Darnel Q. Coloma
J-1 Teacher, Hawai‘i

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 3:48:31 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tim Huycke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1825.

Testimony in Support of HB1825

MAYLEN M. PATANAO
J1 Special Education Teacher, Lokelani Intermediate School
February 2, 2026

Subject: SUPPORT for HB1825

To Honorable Chair and members of the Committee:

My name is **MAYLEN M. PATANAO**, and I am a J1 Special Education Teacher at Lokelani Intermediate School. I am writing to express my strong support for HB1825, which permits the extension of emergency hire terms from three to five years. This change is vital for maintaining the stability of our classrooms and the success of our most vulnerable students.

As a Special Education teacher, my mission is to be the bridge between a student's current challenges and their untapped potential. I don't just teach a curriculum; I build an ecosystem of dignity, inclusion, and agency. By "entering their world," I transform classrooms into safe harbors where a child's silence is met with assistive technology like AAC tools, their frustration is met with "calm-down" grace, and their academic barriers are dismantled through multimodal strategies. My work is rooted in the belief that every small-win—a spoken word, a completed task, or a successful peer interaction, and a week of zero behaviors—is a victory for the entire community. I am here to ensure that my students, regardless of their physical or cognitive starting point, is seen not for their disability, but for their unique contribution to our shared wraparound services.

However, while I am fully committed to my students, J1 teachers like me face significant hurdles in meeting Hawaii's licensing requirements within the current three-year window:

The cost of Praxis exams is a heavy burden. For many of us, fees for the multiple required core and subject-area tests can exceed \$1,000 because we need to retake the exam until we pass it. On a teacher's salary, especially as an international guest, this is a significant financial barrier. Moreover, preparing for these exams requires hours of study. Balancing this with a full-time special education caseload—preparing students' IEPs and progress reports, careful lesson planning, communicating with parents, and collaborating with service providers and admin—is nearly impossible to do in just three years without risking burnout.

The current three-year timeline often forces us J1 educators to leave just as we are making the most impact. Extending this period to five years under HB1825 would:

Reduce Teacher Turnover; thus, allowing us the necessary time to save for exam fees and study effectively without compromising our classroom performance.

Ensure Continuity of Care; thus, preventing the trauma students experience when their trusted support system is suddenly removed due to a licensing deadline.

Strengthen Our School; thus, allowing us to continue our collaboration with lead teachers and parents to ensure every child is valued, supported, and led toward success.

To conclude, as a J1 teacher, I am not just teaching academics; I am helping my students prepare for the real world. I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB1825 to give educators the time we need to become fully licensed while continuing to serve the community we have grown to love.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Hawaii's students.

Sincerely,

MS. MAYLEN M. PATANAO
20394154@k12.hi.us

TO: House Committee on Education

HEARING DATE: Tuesday, February 3, 2026

RE: SUPPORT FOR HB1825 – Relating to Education (Emergency Hire Extensions)

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Jocelle Cina Ale**, and I am writing to express my **strong support for HB1825**. This bill, which extends the emergency hire period from three to five years, is vital for the stability of Hawaii's classrooms and the retention of qualified international educators.

I am currently a Math Teacher at **Lokelani Intermediate School** in the Maui District, serving through the J-1 Visa Program. I bring 13 years of total teaching experience to our keiki, including 11 years in the Philippines and two years here in Maui. I hold both a Bachelor of Secondary Education and a Master's Degree in Teaching Mathematics.

Despite my advanced degrees and over a decade of experience, the current three-year wall for emergency hires creates an unnecessary crisis for my career and my students. While my J-1 visa allows for an extension of up to five years, Hawaii's current licensing rules would force me out of my position after three years simply because of the PRAXIS exam requirement.

I am asking for your support of HB1825 for the following reasons:

- **Student Stability:** My students at Lokelani deserve a consistent teacher who knows their needs. I provide free after-school Math tutorials to ensure no student falls behind. Forcing a qualified teacher to leave after three years disrupts the community we have built.
- **Prioritizing Instruction over Testing:** Balancing full-time teaching, differentiated lesson planning, and community engagement with the intensive preparation for the PRAXIS exams creates immense emotional and financial strain. Every hour

spent on a standardized test is an hour taken away from analyzing student data, meeting with families, and refining curriculum.

- **Professional Recognition:** My Master's degree and 11 years of prior experience should be recognized as evidence of my capability. This bill acknowledges that "on-the-job" experience is a valid measure of a teacher's impact.
- **Retaining Global Talent:** I want to stay and teach in Hawaii for the full five years allowed by my program. I am dedicated to instilling values and self-confidence in my students, preparing them for lifelong success.

HB1825 allows the Department of Education the flexibility to keep experienced, passionate teachers in the classroom longer. It removes a significant hindrance to my ability to serve the Maui community. I respectfully urge the committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for your time and for supporting Hawaii's educators.

Sincerely,

Jocelle Cina Ale

Math Teacher, Lokelani Intermediate School

Maui District

TESTIMONY ON [HB1825](#) - RELATING TO THE HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD.

Permits the Department of Education and charter schools to hire unlicensed individuals as teachers on an emergency basis for five, rather than three, years. Requires the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board to adopt rules.

TO: The House Committee on Education

FROM: Ria Siachen Siapno

POSITION: First-Year J-1 Teacher, Waipahu Elementary School

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

I am writing to express my **strong support for HB1825**, which proposes extending the emergency hire permit for teachers from three years to five years. I am a dedicated educator currently in my first year as a J-1 exchange teacher, and I am sharing my perspective to highlight the unintended obstacles the current three-year limit places on qualified professionals.

Professional Value and Preparation

I am a "full-fledged" bachelor degree holder from the Philippines. I intentionally earned my advanced degree to prepare myself for the rigor of the American classroom and to share my culture with the community here in Hawaii. My transcripts were evaluated by nationally recognized agencies (such as SPANTRAN/CARREE) and deemed equivalent to U.S. standards. To be honest, it is frustrating that my Master's degree and evaluated transcripts don't seem to count for much when compared to the PRAXIS. I am a capable teacher, but this exam is a huge struggle for me. The current 3-year limit doesn't give us enough time to overcome this hurdle while also dealing with the high cost of living and the demands of our first years in a new country.

The Challenges of the 3-Year Timeline

The current three-year window creates an environment of high-pressure "survival" rather than professional growth:

- **Financial Burden:** Between the high cost of living in Hawaii and the expensive fees for the PRAXIS exams, the financial strain is immense.
- **Mental Health:** The pressure to pass multiple exams within a short window—knowing that our ability to stay and teach depends on it—is a significant burden on our mental well-being.
- **National Inconsistency:** Many of our colleagues teaching in the mainland U.S. are granted 5-year permits based on their evaluated credentials. We are simply asking for parity with our peers in other states.

The Goal: A Fair Path to Success

I'm not looking for a way around the standards—I truly value them. I'm just looking for a timeline that makes meeting them possible without burning out. We love these schools and these kids; they are the reason we're here. Many of us have big dreams to keep learning and growing professionally, but the 'three years or you're out' rule makes it feel like we're constantly racing against a clock. **It's hard to give my students 100% when I'm worried that my time here has an expiration date.**

By extending the permit to **five years**, you provide us with the necessary time to navigate the licensing process without the constant fear of displacement. It allows us to be the stable, high-quality educators Hawaii's students deserve.

I respectfully urge the committee to **pass HB1825** and support the teachers who have traveled across the world to serve the children of Hawaii and not just to us J1 but to all emergency hired teachers. WE ALSO MATTER.

Mahalo for your time and for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Ria Siachen Siapno

808-302-7429 | riasiachen@gmail.com

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:42:40 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you

HB-1825

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:12:16 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

thank you for supporting this essential bill