



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

Date: 04/09/2026

Time: 10:30 AM

Location: CR 211 & Videoconference

Committee: JDC/WAM

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB1888, SD1, RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.

Purpose of Bill: Part I: Requires the Department of Education and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers, including sports officials. Authorizes the Attorney General to assist educational workers who have been subject to harassment or intentional bodily injury in obtaining a temporary restraining order. Part II: Clarifies that a sports official includes a school or league administrator. Clarifies that a sports official's duties cover sports events at public schools and private schools. Makes intentional bodily injury of an educational worker or a sports official engaged in the lawful discharge of their duties a class B felony. Part III: Elevates the penalty for harassment of educational workers to a misdemeanor. Effective 7/1/3000. (SD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 1888, HD 3, SD 1, which increases safeguards for educational workers who encounter instances of harassment, and the establishment of a mechanism to address harassment is essential to ensuring a secure and conducive environment for educators and students in the State.

The Department of the Attorney General is currently developing a pilot program to assist state agencies with Temporary Restraining Orders (TRO) on behalf of their employees. The Department of the Attorney General will identify private attorneys available to assist state employees with TROs and reimburse state agencies for these services.

To ensure the effective continuation and successful accomplishment of the Department's academic mission, the Department recommends reinserting in Part III, Section 8(g): Disrupts or interferes with the administration or functions of any school, school administration office, or school board. Additionally, the Department would request the reinsertion of administrators in the definition of educational worker to make

it abundantly clear that administrators are also protected by this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide support to HB 1888, HD 3, SD 1.



April 8, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT** of **HB1888 HD3 SD1**, Relating to the Safety of Educational Workers

To: Senators Donovan M. Dela Cruz and Karl Rhoads, Chairs
Senators Sharon Y. Moriwaki and Mike Gabbard, Vice Chairs
Members of the Senate Committees on Ways and Means, and on Judiciary

From: Llasmin Chaine, LSW, Executive Director, Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **HB1888 HD3 SD1**, Relating to the Safety of Educational Workers

Hearing: Thursday, April 9, 2026, 10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women **supports HB1888 HD3 SD1**, strengthening protections and workplace safety for local educational workers and sports officials.

Our organization is dedicated to advancing equality, safety, and well-being for women and girls statewide. This bill is significant because it addresses workplace harassment and violence, issues that disproportionately affect women in educational settings and extracurricular roles, including sports officials. **Ensuring a safe and respectful environment for all educational workers is essential to achieving gender equity and supporting the professional contributions of women.**

By requiring schools to report and address harassment, and by clarifying and elevating penalties for harassment and intentional bodily injury, this bill **provides meaningful deterrents and support mechanisms**. Authorizing the Attorney General to assist victims in obtaining restraining orders further **strengthens access to justice**, particularly for those who may face barriers navigating legal processes. These provisions align with best practices in workplace safety and policy solutions.

We respectfully recommend that implementation guidance include attention to gender-based harassment and violence, ensuring that reporting and support procedures are accessible and trauma-informed. Continued collaboration with stakeholders, including women's advocacy organizations and gender-based violence survivor service providers, will help ensure these protections are effective and inclusive.

We respectfully urge these Committees to **pass HB1888 HD3 SD1**. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

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 1888 HD3 SD1 RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS
DATE: April 9, 2026
TIME: 10:30 A.M.
COMMITTEE: Committee on Judiciary & Committee on Ways & Means
ROOM: Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
FROM: Ed H. Noh, Ed. D., Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Rhoads, Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the Committees:

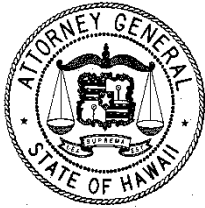
The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 1888 HD3 SD1** which:

1. Requires the Department of Education and public charter schools to take certain steps to address the harassment of educational workers, including sports officials;
2. Authorizes the Attorney General to assist educational workers who have been subject to harassment or intentional bodily injury in obtaining a temporary restraining order;
3. Clarifies that a ‘sports official’ includes school or league administrators and that a sports official’s duties cover sports events at public and private schools;
4. Makes intentional bodily injury of an educational worker or sports official a class B felony; and
5. Elevates the penalty for harassment of educational workers to a misdemeanor.

The Commission appreciates the inclusion of public charter schools in this measure as charter schools are a part of the public education system. Providing safeguards and measures for educators and sports officials who encounter instances of harassment and intentional bodily injury is essential in creating a positive and safe school environment.

The Commission is prepared to work with the Legislature, the DOE, and our public charter schools in the implementation of this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026

LATE

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 1888, H.D. 3, S.D. 1, RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEES ON JUDICIARY AND ON WAYS AND MEANS

DATE: Thursday, April 9, 2026

TIME: 10:30 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 211

TESTIFIER(S): **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY.**

(For more information, contact Anne T. Horiuchi or Randall M. Wat, Deputy Attorneys General, at 808-586-1255)

Chairs Rhoads and Dela Cruz and Members of the Committees:

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

The bill: (1) requires the Department of Education (DOE) and public charter schools to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers, including sports officials; (2) authorizes the Department to assist educational workers subjected to harassment or intentional bodily injury in obtaining a temporary restraining order (TRO); (3) clarifies that "sports official" includes school or league administrators; (4) clarifies that a sports official's duties include events at both public and private schools; (5) makes intentional bodily injury of an educational worker or sports official engaged in the lawful discharge of their duties a class B felony; and (6) elevates the penalty for harassment of educational workers to a misdemeanor.

1. Department Assistance with TROs

Proposed sections 302A- (e) and 302D- (e), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) (page 4, lines 7-9, and page 7, lines 16-18, respectively), authorize the Department to assist educational workers subjected to harassment or intentional bodily injury in obtaining TROs. However, while the Department may defend state employees in civil actions arising from the actions taken within the scope of the employee's employment

(see section 662-16(a), HRS), it is not authorized to file affirmative claims on their behalf. We note, instead, that House Bill No. 2091, H.D. 2, S.D.1 , and Senate Bill No. 2567, S.D. 2, H.D. 2 would establish a two-year pilot project to provide such protections for public servants utilizing a different mechanism consistent with the role of the Department, and the Department strongly supports these bills.

Accordingly, the Department recommends deleting proposed sections 302A- (e) and 302D- (e), HRS, from the bill.

2. Sports Officials as Educational Workers

Proposed sections 302A- (f)(1) and 302D- (f)(1), HRS (page 4, lines 12-13, and page 8, lines 1-2, respectively), define "educational worker" to include sports officials. Sports officials, however, are typically independent contractors, not employees of the DOE or public charter schools.

To better reflect this distinction, the Department recommends:

- Removing "sports official" from the definition of "educational worker" in proposed sections 302A- (f)(1) and 302D- (f)(1); and
- Revising proposed sections 302A- (f)(3) and 302D- (f)(3), as follows:
(3) A **sports official or other** person hired by [the department/a public charter school] on a contractual basis and engaged in carrying out a [department/public charter school] function.

(Suggested changes Ramseyered against the existing text of the bill and in bold.)

Similarly, the bill amends section 711-1106, HRS, to incorporate the proposed definition of "educational workers" created in new sections 302A- (f) and 302D- (f).

(Page 20, lines 4-10.) The Department recommends:

- Removing "sports official" from proposed section 711-1106(3)(a) on page 20, line 6, and
- Revising proposed section 711-1106(3)(c) on page 20, lines 15-18, as follows:
(c) A **sports official or other** person hired by the department of education or by a public charter school on a contractual basis and engaged in carrying out a department of education or public charter school function, respectively.

(Suggested changes Ramseyered against the existing text of the bill and in bold.)

3. Unauthorized Practice of Law

Section 4 of the bill amends section 605-14, HRS, to provide that the preparation of any legal form or document for any complainant seeking a TRO pursuant to new sections 302A- or 302D- is not the unauthorized practice of law. These provisions appear to be based on earlier drafts that allowed DOE and the Public Charter School Commission (Commission) to employ advocates for this purpose.

Because the bill no longer includes those provisions, the Department recommends deleting section 4 of the bill (page 8, line 15, through page 9, line 9).

4. Aligning New Criminal Statutes Affecting Educational Workers

Sections 6 and 7 of the bill amend sections 707-710 and 707-711, HRS, respectively, to increase penalties for assaults against educational workers. (page 11, line 8, through page 18, line 10). To ensure consistency across the penal code, the Department recommends adding a section to the bill to amend section 707-700, HRS, by adding a definition of "educational worker" to read as follows:

"Educational worker" means any specialist, counselor, teacher, or employee of the department of education or a public charter school; a person who is a volunteer, as defined in section 90-1, in a school program, activity, or function that is established, sanctioned, or approved by the department of education or a public charter school; or a sports official or other person hired by the department of education or a public charter school on a contractual basis and engaged in carrying out a department of education or a public charter school function, respectively.

Further, to impose higher penalties for assaulting educational workers, while also ensuring a more graduated, systematic approach that is consistent with the structure of the penal code, the Department recommends that, instead of deleting section 707-711(1)(e), HRS, on page 13, line 14, through page 14, line 5, amending that section as follows:

- (e) Intentionally or knowingly causes bodily injury to an educational worker who is engaged in the performance of duty or who is within an educational facility[. ~~For the purposes of this paragraph, "educational worker" means any administrator, specialist, counselor, teacher, or employee of the department of education or an employee of a charter school; a person who is a volunteer, as defined in section 90-1, in a school program, activity, or function that is established, sanctioned, or approved by the~~

~~department of education; or a person hired by the department of education on a contractual basis and engaged in carrying out an educational function];~~

5. Certain Amendments Relating to Sports Officials

The Department is concerned that certain provisions related to "sports officials" may be subject to challenge under section 14 of article III of the Hawai'i Constitution, which requires that each law embrace only one subject, expressed in its title. The subject expressed in the bill's title is "The Safety of Educational Workers."

However, several provisions in the bill extend beyond that subject. Although the bill amends the definition of "sports official" in section 706-605.6, HRS, to include a limited class of officials working at sports events at public or private schools, the statutory definition itself is not confined to those settings. As a result, the referenced criminal provisions apply more broadly to sports officials in professional, recreational, or other non-school athletic contexts who are not connected to school-sponsored events.

Because these provisions incorporate a definition that extends to individuals outside educational context, they regulate conduct beyond the scope of "educational workers" expressed in this bill's title. This creates a risk that the bill may be found to violate the single-subject requirement.

To reduce the risk, the Department recommends the following amendments:

- **Amend proposed section 707-710(1)(c)(i), HRS** (page 11, line 17, through page 12, line 3); to read as follows:

(c) Substantial bodily injury to:

- (i) A school sports official who is engaged in the lawful discharge of the school sports official's duties; provided that for the purpose of this subparagraph, "school sports official" means a person at a sports event at a public or private school, who enforces the rules of the event, such as an umpire, referee, timer, or scorer, or a person who supervises the participants, such as a coach, or a league or school administrator, regardless of whether the person is paid or provides their services as an unpaid volunteer, and "lawful discharge of the school sports official's duty" means the performance of duties of a school sports official from the time the school sports official arrives at the venue of a school sports event and ending when the school sports official returns to their residence or business.

- **Amend, rather than delete, section 707-711(1)(n), HRS** (assault in the second degree) (page 17, lines 7-12), as follows:
 - (n) **[Intentionally] Unless otherwise provided, intentionally** or knowingly causes bodily injury to a sports official who is engaged in the lawful discharge of the sports official's duties. For the purposes of this paragraph, "sports official" and "lawful discharge of the sports official's duties" have the same meaning as in section 706-605.6;
- **Amend proposed section 711-1106(3)(a), HRS** (page 20, lines 6-10), as follows:
 - (a) Any specialist, counselor, teacher, ~~[sports official,]~~ or employee of the department of education or a public charter school; **[provided that for the purposes of this paragraph "sports official" has the same meaning as defined in section 706-605.6;]**
- **Amend proposed section 711-1106(3)(c), HRS** (page 20, lines 15-18), to as follows:
 - (c) A person, **including a school sports official as defined in section 707-710(1)(c)(i)**, hired by the department of education or by a public charter school on a contractual basis and engaged in carrying out a department of education or public charter school function, respectively.

(Suggested changes Ramseyered against the existing text and in bold.)

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



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Judiciary
Committee on Ways and Means

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

April 9, 2026

H.B. 1888 H.D. 3, S.D. 1 — RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the intent of H.B. 1888, H.D. 3, S.D. 1, which requires the Department of Education and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers, including sports officials, and authorizes the Attorney General to assist educational workers who have been subject to harassment or intentional bodily injury in obtaining a temporary restraining order.

For several years now, the HGEA has expressed concern to the DOE about the escalation of violence against employees. We have demanded that both the DOE and Attorney General do more to protect and support employees instead of seeking first to avoid liability. Earlier this school year, a school administrator was brutally assaulted at an Oahu public high school. After the assault, we demanded in a letter to the Superintendent to know what steps the DOE intends to take to prevent such instances from occurring again in the future.

We support the intent of this bill as it also seeks to achieve what we have been demanding from the DOE. Educational workers should feel assured that their employer is committed to taking prompt and effective action against harassing conduct and those who engage in harassing behavior should be held accountable.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1888, H.D. 3, S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



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

Date: 04/09/2026

Time: 10:30 AM

Location: 325

Committee: JUDICIARY & WAM

Department: Education
Person Testifying: Derek Minakami, NBCT, Principal of Kāneʻohe Elementary School
Title of Bill: HB1888 RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.

Position: SUPPORT

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwake, Vice Chair Gabbard, 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 threaten the safety of educational workers and puts into place protections for those being targeted. Further, it reinforces that schools, a haven for our most vulnerable populations, should be kept safe and free of harassment.

Mahalo for your consideration of this request.



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 HAWAI'I SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
&
TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Item: HB 1888, HD3, SD1 – Relating to the Safety of Educational Workers

Position: Support

Hearing: Thursday, April 9, 2026, 10:30 am, Room 211

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

Dear Chairs Rhoads & Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Gabbard & Moriwaki, and members of the committees,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) believes that educational workers play a critical role in keeping our schools safe and supportive for children. When educators and staff face harassment or threats without clear protections or consistent response procedures, it affects not only employees but also students and school communities. As such, we ask that you **support H.B. 1888, HD3, SD1**.

The HSTA has been speaking on this topic for many years and applauds the efforts this session to examine how we can protect our teachers and staff at schools around the state. We appreciate the advocates who have worked on HB 1888's bill language for many years and find it important to mention that this piece of legislation creates clarity and accountability when harassment occurs and requires the Department of Education to act.

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 H.B. 1888, HD3, SD1.

Mahalo.



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

**THE SENATE
KA 'AHA KENEKOA
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026**

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Thursday, April 9, 2026, 10:30 AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on HB1888, HD3, SD1 – RELATING TO EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

Chairs Dela Cruz and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Gabbard, 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 supports HB1888, HD3, SD1, which requires the Department of Education (“DOE”) and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers, including sports officials. This measure also authorizes the Attorney General to assist educational workers who have been subject to harassment or intentional bodily injury in obtaining a temporary restraining order and elevates the penalty for harassment to a misdemeanor when the recipient is an educational worker.

We strongly believe that educational workers should feel assured that the DOE and public charter schools are committed to taking effective action against harassment in order to protect the rights and dignity of the hard-working public employees who are tasked with maintaining a positive learning environment for Hawaii’s students.

Given recent events and the apparent rise in incidents of harassment targeting educational workers, it seems evident, unfortunately, that legislation like this is necessary.

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

HEADQUARTERS

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MAUI

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1.866.454.4166

Toll Free - *Molokai/Lanai only*

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 12:09:33 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB1888, which takes essential steps to protect educational workers from harassment and provides clear procedures for reporting and response. Our teachers, administrators, and school staff shape Hawai‘i's future every day. They deserve to do so in safety and without fear.

The Problem

Educational workers increasingly face harassment from students, parents, and community members—behavior that disrupts schools, demoralizes staff, and drives experienced educators from the profession. While existing law addresses discrimination and harassment against students, protections for workers facing harassment specifically because of their role as educational workers remain insufficient.

When workers fear harassment, they leave. Hawai‘i already faces educator shortages that harm student outcomes. Clear procedures, robust investigation, and meaningful penalties signal that we value the people who educate our children. Workers should not have to accept harassment as part of the job.

HB1888 is reasonable, targeted, and overdue. I urge its passage.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 2:07:31 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
NOELLE TAVARES-SUMIYE	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committees:

Educational workers play a critical role in keeping our schools safe for children. When educators and staff face harassment or threats without clear protections or consistent response procedures, it affects not only employees, but entire school communities.

HB1888 establishes clear expectations for how incidents are addressed, including investigation, documentation, and response. This ensures concerns are taken seriously and handled consistently, rather than informally or in isolation. It is a practical step toward preventing situations from escalating and creating safer school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the well-being of educational workers. When educators feel unsafe or unsupported, it impacts their ability to do their jobs and support students effectively.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888.

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 2:09:35 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaimie Song	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committees:

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The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the well-being of educational workers. When educators feel unsafe or unsupported, it impacts their ability to do their jobs and support students effectively.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888.

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 2:50:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara Taitano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committees:

Educational workers play a critical role in keeping our schools safe for children. When educators and staff face harassment or threats without clear protections or consistent response procedures, it affects not only employees, but entire school communities.

HB1888 establishes clear expectations for how incidents are addressed, including investigation, documentation, and response. This ensures concerns are taken seriously and handled consistently, rather than informally or in isolation. It is a practical step toward preventing situations from escalating and creating safer school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the well-being of educational workers. When educators feel unsafe or unsupported, it impacts their ability to do their jobs and support students effectively.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888.

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 3:50:45 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inger Stonehill	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committees:

Educational workers show up every day with one purpose—to protect, teach, and care for our children. They are expected to create safe spaces for students, yet too many are doing this work while feeling unsafe themselves.

When educators face harassment or threats without clear protections, it sends a troubling message: that their safety is secondary. The consequences are not abstract. They are real—fear in the workplace, emotional strain, and the slow erosion of the trust that holds school communities together. No educator should have to question whether their concerns will be taken seriously or whether they will be left to handle these situations alone.

The lack of consistent procedures allows harmful incidents to be overlooked or minimized. When that happens, problems do not disappear—they grow. What begins as a single incident can escalate, affecting not only staff, but the students who depend on them for stability and support.

HB1888 is not just a policy improvement—it is a statement of values. It establishes clear, accountable steps for investigation, documentation, and response. It ensures that when educational workers speak up, they are heard, protected, and supported. It affirms that their safety and dignity are essential to the functioning of our schools.

We ask so much of our educators. The very least we can do is ensure they are not left vulnerable in the process. Failing to act is not neutral—it allows harm to continue.

I respectfully and urgently urge you to support HB1888.

Inger Stonehill

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 5:42:56 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine H. Payne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 7, 2026

Testimony on HB 1888, HD3, SD1 (SSCR 3388)

Relating to the Safety of Educational Workers

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means; and Chair Rhoads and Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

I am Catherine H. Payne, a retired Department of Education teacher and administrator.

My testimony is in support of HB 1888, HD3, SD1 (SSCR 3388).

I am thankful that this important measure is being heard by your committees. The issue of threats and verbal and physical harassment of public school education workers has been long-standing and not appropriately addressed across the system. Good-faith efforts have been made to assist individuals and schools facing challenges, but clear legal expectations and consequences have not been established.

In recent years the escalation of verbal threats has been more common behind the anonymity of social media. Even when the perpetrator is identifiable it has been difficult to do anything until the threats have been acted upon. The toll this has taken on the climate of the schools and on the individuals subjected to the harassment has been significant. People leave the profession or are discouraged from even considering a career in teaching if they are not protected from threats and abuse.

This is an opportunity to make progress on this important matter. You will send a message to educators that they are worthy of support.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 8:50:05 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committees:

When workers are harassed or threatened because of their job, their employer has a responsibility to step in and address it. At the Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE), that response is inconsistent and, at times, nonexistent. A safe workplace should not depend on which supervisor an educational worker reports to.

Since 2012, Department of Human Resources Development policy 800.002 has prohibited workplace violence, including intimidation, threats, and disruptive conduct by members of the public. More than a decade later, educational workers are still waiting to see that standard applied in a consistent and meaningful way within the DOE.

That is the gap HB1888 addresses. It establishes a clear and timely response when an employee faces an unsafe situation.

As this bill has moved forward, several concerns have been raised. Some testimony suggests this measure criminalizes parents advocating for their children. That is not accurate. Nothing in this bill restricts a parent's ability to participate in IEP meetings, challenge decisions, or advocate for services. Those protections remain fully intact under federal law.

There are also claims that current laws are sufficient. If that were the case, we would not continue to see teachers and school staff subjected to harassment and assault while doing their jobs. These incidents carry real consequences. They disrupt classrooms, impact students, drive educators out of the profession, and in some cases cause lasting trauma for employees.

Concerns about overcriminalization or due process have also been raised. This bill does not remove due process or expand criminal liability beyond what already exists in statute. It sets expectations for how the DOE responds as an employer. Without a clear structure, employees are often left to navigate these situations on their own.

Previous opposing testimony framed as protecting parent voice overlooks an important reality. Without clear boundaries or accountability, it shields repeat offenders whose behavior harms frontline workers.

As a parent, I understand how important it is to speak up for your child. However, those rights must exist alongside basic expectations for behavior. No educator should be threatened or intimidated as part of their job, and no child should have to witness it. Teachers have reported these incidents occurring in front of students and disrupting the learning environment. Educational worker safety is student safety.

When I experienced severe and ongoing harassment tied to my job, I was told by DOE and Attorney General officials that tolerating that conduct was part of my duties, even with a court-issued injunction in place. After it expired three years later, the individual resumed targeting me online.

While individuals are responsible for their actions, when this type of conduct continues for years without a structured response or consequences, the system is not working.

Employers, particularly government agencies, have a duty to respond to the growing number of incidents targeting public employees. This is reflected in this session's Judiciary package, which advances a more active role for employers, including the ability to seek temporary restraining orders on behalf of employees experiencing workplace harassment. Testimony on those measures confirms these incidents are increasing and widespread.

DOE officials recently shared that they are developing internal protocols to address harassment by members of the public. I appreciate that progress. At the same time, those protocols are not yet in place, and for many years the Department's position was that this type of conduct was a "personal matter," with the use of state resources to respond and support employees considered "unconstitutional."

Codifying minimum requirements ensures accountability and follow-through. Educational workers have waited long enough for that standard to be met. I respectfully urge you to pass HB1888.

Sincerely,
Lindsay Chambers

April 7, 2026

Chairs Rhoads and Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Gabbard & Moriwaki, and committee members:

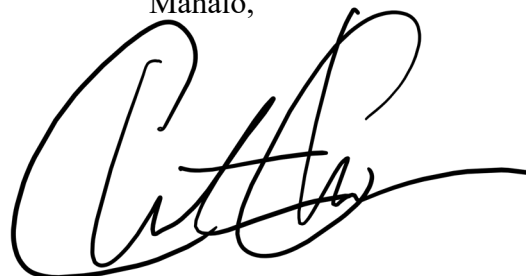
I am writing to express my strong support for HB1888. The bill is the result of several years of work by numerous Department of Education employees and former employees who have faced threats and harassment as a direct result of their work. They have been ringing the alarm about escalating safety threats and the need for specific requirements that protect educational workers. As we have all recently seen, their concerns were justified because there is shocking video footage of a physical attack against an educational worker who was simply trying to deescalate an angry parent.

In the past, the Department of Education refused to step in to help employees who were being threatened and harassed. Instead, the Department took the position that it was not allowed to commit its resources to help its employees secure Temporary Restraining Orders or pursue other actions required to protect themselves. As a result, talented educators left the profession, moved away, or found work in the private sector. The Department – and the students it serves – lost out on experienced and dedicated employees who wanted to make a difference.

HB1888 can fix this problem by making it clear the Legislature values the people who work for the State by requiring the Department of Education to provide support to employees who are being threatened and harassed simply because they are doing their jobs. In addition, HB1888 ensures all employees are treated fairly because it establishes clear requirements for the Department. Those requirements do more than just protect the employees. They also ensure the Department's response is satisfactory and does not lead to potential claims against the State.

In a perfect world, HB1888 would not be necessary. Just like any other employer, the Department has legal and moral obligations to ensure its employees work in a safe environment that is free from threats, harassment, and violence. Unfortunately, history shows that legislative action is necessary. Years have already passed without the Department being able to implement processes and procedures to protect educational workers who are being threatened and harassed. Much of that delay appears to be the result of confusion about whether the Department is allowed to provide supports to its employees. HB1888 eliminates any questions about whether the Department must protect its employees and provides a clear framework for what actions are necessary. It is an important piece of protection for the thousands of individuals who are working to support the children of our State.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Dela Cruz', written in a cursive style.

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 5:53:15 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ivana Crumpton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committees:

Educational workers play a critical role in keeping our schools safe for children. When educators and staff face harassment or threats without clear protections or consistent response procedures, it affects not only employees, but entire school communities.

HB1888 establishes clear expectations for how incidents are addressed, including investigation, documentation, and response. This ensures concerns are taken seriously and handled consistently, rather than informally or in isolation. It is a practical step toward preventing situations from escalating and creating safer school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the well-being of educational workers. When educators feel unsafe or unsupported, it impacts their ability to do their jobs and support students effectively.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888.

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 7:28:35 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Hirano Kaneko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committees:

As a parent of school-age keiki, and a daughter and granddaughter of educators, I strongly support HB1888. Under no circumstances is it acceptable for our educators or staff to deal with harassment or threats of violence.

HB1888 establishes clear expectations of how incidents are addressed, which has been lacking in our school systems. We have seen more and more in the news and online how our educators and staff at schools have been targeted and harassed. We need to do better for them.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888.

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 8:30:13 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tricia M. Matsukawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

Educational workers play a critical role in keeping our schools safe for children. When educators and staff face harassment or threats without clear protections or consistent response procedures, it affects not only employees, but entire school communities.

HB1888 establishes clear expectations for how incidents are addressed, including investigation, documentation, and response. This ensures concerns are taken seriously and handled consistently, rather than informally or in isolation. It is a practical step toward preventing situations from escalating and creating safer school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the well-being of educational workers. When educators feel unsafe or unsupported, it impacts their ability to do their jobs and support students effectively. Without stronger protections, the DOE will continue to lose dedicated, highly qualified educators with strong educational backgrounds—teachers who are deeply committed to their students but ultimately leave because they do not feel safe or supported. I am one of those teachers.

I am a former DOE teacher who chose to teach because I loved my students and the impact I was able to make. I earned a degree in psychology with a focus in early childhood development from the University of Washington and later received my Master’s in Elementary Education from Chaminade University. I taught 4th and 5th grade—testing years—and I was the teacher who spent weekends in the classroom preparing lessons and often stayed until 10 p.m. to ensure everything was ready for my students.

What ultimately led me to leave the DOE was harassment from a few parents.

One incident, in particular, led me to resign. During a language arts lesson, I asked a student for the third time to put away her mini society money that she was playing with. When she chose not to follow directions, I confiscated it. Her mother, who was volunteering in another classroom, overheard and became upset. That evening, multiple parents contacted me through Facebook to warn me that she was telling people on Schofield Barracks that she was “going to get me.”

The following morning, the school principal escorted me to my classroom where the parent was waiting. I don't know what might have happened had those parents not warned me.

Ultimately, the decision was made to move her child to another class. I worked long hours, went above and beyond for my students, and yet I found myself fearing for my safety. It was not worth it.

I still have parents and former students visit me, and I deeply miss being in the classroom. However, I will never forget the fear caused by that experience. I continue to hear similar stories from educators today, and it is terrifying. They need support and protection.

This would not be acceptable in the private sector. As a current employer, I would never allow my employees to be harassed by clients without taking meaningful action to protect them.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888 to help protect educational workers and ensure safer school environments for both staff and students.

Sincerely,
Tricia Matsukawa

President of Matsukawa Insurance Agency, Inc.

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 9:07:59 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kalma Wong	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 8, 2026

Re: HB1888 HD3 SD1

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Senate Committees on Judiciary and Ways and Means,

I strongly **OPPOSE** HB1888 HD3 SD1. The passage of this bill will unnecessarily elevate harassment from a petty misdemeanor to a full misdemeanor when the complainant is an “educational worker,” and will unjustifiably make simple “bodily injury” an offense of assault in the first degree.

This bill will create a special class of people that puts the bill’s definition of “educational worker” above all others in the state. This bill will also place harassment (when the recipient is an “educational worker”) in the same classification as other full misdemeanors, such as third-degree negligent homicide, fourth-degree sexual assault, fourth-degree arson, and assault in the third degree.

According to the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §711-1106, “a person commits the offense of harassment if, with intent to harass, annoy, or alarm any other person, that person...repeatedly makes telephone calls, facsimile transmissions, or any form of electronic communication...including electronic mail transmissions, without purpose of legitimate communication...” Again, this is simply a PETTY misdemeanor.

When the complainant is an “educational worker,” who gets to determine whether or not the purpose of the communication was legitimate? Parents of children with special needs must communicate through phone calls and emails with the school and staff regularly and repeatedly in order to ensure that their children receive an appropriate education. The subjective nature of this statute will put parents at risk of being arrested for advocating for their children and perhaps be subjected to \$2000 in fines and a year in jail. Essentially, a parent may be threatened with a year in jail for annoying an “educational worker” with excessive emails. The result of this threat will be the suppression of advocacy by parents of special needs children and will quash legitimate complaints.

HB1888 HD3 SD1 also classifies the simple bodily injury of an “educational worker” or “sports official” as an assault in the first-degree. This is beyond overreach. The threshold for “bodily injury” is physical pain, no matter how minor or fleeting. It is nonsensical to make the penalty for a little push up to 10 years in prison and fines up to \$25,000. HB1888, which started out the session as a bill to assist teachers with getting temporary restraining orders, has morphed into basically an enhanced sentencing bill. Studies have shown that enhanced sentencing does not achieve meaningful deterrence, which in turn does not increase public safety. One must conclude that the sole purpose for enhanced sentencing is simply revenge.

The amendments to the original bill, HB1888, are both unnecessary and harmful.

Please OPPOSE HB1888 HD3 SD1.

Sincerely,

Kalma K. Wong, Ph.D.

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 9:17:00 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leigh Wong-Miyasato	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The proposed changes to the harassment statute are unconstitutional and unnecessary, and will be harmful to school children in Hawai'i.

LATE

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 10:41:38 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Jones	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe staff of our education system needs to feel safe in the work environment. I also believe our special needs students maybe negatively affected if this goes through. I oppose. There must be a better way then what is presented.

LATE

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 12:29:21 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
D. Miyahira	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members,

I strongly oppose HB1888. It is understandable that this bill has been introduced in order to protect educational workers, but it would likely have a detrimental affect on parents who want to advocate for their children by raising concerns, asking for help, or bringing up questions.

According to §711-1106, it is considered harassment when "a person commits the offense of harassment if, with intent to harass, annoy, or alarm any other person, that person." I focus on the word "annoy." **The measure of annoyance is highly subjective.** Would then a worker who receives repeated communication from a parent or student be able to classify it as harassment?

The punishment of these offenses are concerning. To put "harassment of an educational worker," if that harassment is so much as a shove or bump, in the same category as negligent homicide and make it a felony seems unfitting. Unless it's an extreme case, it's likely that in most cases, **the crime would not fit the punishment.**

Please also consider the special needs commmunity, particularly those with severe needs, who often have no control over their behavior and actions. It is alarming to think that they could be charged for a crime they do not mean to do. It affects children, parents, siblings—the entire family.

Thank you for hearing my testimony. Please do not let this bill pass.

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 2:25:28 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM



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

Comments:

I support HB 1888 HD3 SD1 – with concerns about two (2) changes in the Senate draft.

The positive intent remains intact: Educational workers are increasingly exposed to harassment and threats, and employers have a responsibility to protect their employees from harm encountered in the course of their work. SD1 advances that principle, but two revisions undercut it.

1. TRO assistance was changed from mandatory to discretionary. HD3 required the employer to assist workers in obtaining temporary restraining orders. SD1 replaces that obligation with permissive authority for the Attorney General. Discretionary means optional – and optional protections are not protections. If we are serious about the employer's duty to its workers, this should be restored to "shall."
2. The removal of subsection (g) – disrupting school administration or functions – leaves a meaningful gap. A parent who storms into a school office and obstructs normal operations is not engaging in protected advocacy. Parents have appropriate channels – IEP meetings, board meetings, formal complaints, or the choice to withdraw their child. Due process protections remain in place for anyone accused of harassment. If the concern is overbreadth, the answer is narrower drafting – not deletion.

As an aside, I would also support reinserting "administrator" in the definition of educational worker to avoid ambiguity created by its deliberate removal from HD3.

Overall, I support this bill and urge its passage with my proposed amendments to bring back key elements from the earlier House draft.

LATE

HB-1888-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 8:28:43 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/9/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JAMIE FUKAMI	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB1888 HD3 S1 This would do more harm to parents and/or guardians of our special needs keiki(s) or, grown adults. Please word things in layman's term as well, we are not lawyers and understand verbiage that are not in our daily vocabulary. Me and my ohana OPPOSES this. Please be pono and do the right thing. Mahalo!