



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

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 1888, RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

DATE: Tuesday, February 3, 2026

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 309

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

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

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

The bill 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.

Sections 2 and 3 of the bill add a new section to chapters 302A and 302D, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). Paragraph (5) of subsection (d) of both new sections requires the DOE and public charter schools to:

Assist educational workers with any legal actions that may arise from harassment, as provided for in section 711-1106, because of the educational worker's position as an educational worker, including reimbursing the educational worker for the costs incurred from serving temporary restraining orders related to the harassment, but shall not include the payment of attorney's fees or court costs[.]

Page 4, lines 10-17, and page 7, line 19, through page 8, line 5. The Department is concerned that the phrase, "Assist educational workers with any legal actions," could be construed to include providing legal assistance, or to include civil lawsuits relating to the harassment. For clarity, the Department suggests revising paragraph (5) of new subsection (d) on page 4, lines 10 through 17, and on page 7, line 19 through page 8, line 5, as follows:

Assist educational workers with ~~[any]~~ legal actions **to obtain temporary restraining orders** that may arise from harassment, as provided for in section 711-1106, because of the educational worker's position as an educational worker, including reimbursing the educational worker for the costs incurred from serving temporary restraining orders related to the harassment, but shall not include the payment of attorney's fees or court costs[.]

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

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



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: HB1888, RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.

Purpose of Bill: 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.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the underlying goals of HB 1888, to provide additional protections to its employees, but has some requested revisions.

The Department recommends adding the following language to the first paragraph on page 2, beginning at line 4: "because of the educational worker's position as an education worker, unless an emergency safety plan under subsection (d)(4) is implemented.

The Department recommends limiting subsection (d)(5) to preclude civil lawsuits by revising that subsection as follows: "Assist educational workers with the service of temporary restraining orders that may arise from harassment, as provided for in section 711-1106, by reimbursing the educational workers for the costs incurred from serving the temporary restraining orders related to the harassment, but shall not include the payment of attorney's fees or court costs.

For clarity in reference to subsection (c) on page 2, the Department recommends defining paid leave as follows: "Paid leave under this subsection may be satisfied through the use of accrued sick leave, vacation leave, administrative leave, or any other paid leave authorized by the employer, and shall not require the employer to provide additional paid leave beyond existing leave benefits."

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to HB 1888.

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 RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS
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 1888** 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

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 who encounter instances of harassment is essential to creating a positive school environment.

The Commission is available to work with this committee, the DOE, and our public charter schools in moving this legislation forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808,543,0011 • Fax: 808,528,0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Education

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 3, 2026

H.B. 1888 — RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the intent of H.B. 1888, 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.

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.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 • Fax: (808) 839-7106 • Web: www.hsta.org

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 1888 - RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS**

Position: **Supports**

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

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

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

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association 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 HB 1888**.

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 HB 1888.

Mahalo.



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

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

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

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

This bill provides accountability for those that 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.



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

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

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Rep. Justin Woodson, Chair

Rep. Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

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

Re: Testimony on HB1888 – RELATING TO EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

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

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

UPW **strongly supports** HB1888, 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.

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.

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Toll Free - Molokai/Lanai only

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:47:29 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Iwamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Natalie Iwamoto, and I serve as the Associate Athletic Director at Moanalua High School. I am writing to offer my support for H.B. 1888, which seeks to establish essential safeguards and procedural support for educational workers facing harassment and violence.

On December 4, 2025, while performing my official duties as the associate athletic director escorting basketball officials to their vehicles after a game, I was attacked by two parents. In the aftermath of this incident, I found myself navigating a complex legal landscape entirely on my own. This included interacting with the Honolulu Police Department and detectives, researching and filing a Temporary Restraining Order, and seeking private legal counsel for court representation. While the Department of Education (DOE) is a supportive environment, there is currently no formal procedural "roadmap" for employees who are targeted by outside actors while on the clock.

It is important to recognize that the successful prosecution of bad actors is in the DOE's best interest. When the state and the department stand firmly behind their employees in the legal system, it sends a powerful deterrent message to the community. A lack of accountability for those who harass school staff creates a culture of permissiveness that invites further incidents and leads to a significant erosion of workplace morale.

Furthermore, leaving employees to navigate these threats alone creates an institutional vulnerability that compromises campus security. Most critically, the absence of a formal support structure serves as a deterrent to recruitment and retention. By supporting workers through the legal process, the DOE protects its most valuable asset—its personnel—and ensures that school campuses remain environments focused on education rather than conflict.

My goal is to share my experience to help refine the institutional support available to all educational workers. H.B. 1888 offers a valuable framework for this by introducing mechanisms similar to the advocacy roles found in the justice system. I suggest the Department designate a specific liaison to assist employees in navigating post-incident procedures, transforming a currently solitary process into a collaborative, department-led effort for safety.

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 8:36:45 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inger Stonehill	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

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

Educational workers show up every day to protect, support, and care for our children. Yet when educators are harassed or threatened, too often they are met with silence, inconsistency, or inaction.

This is not a hypothetical situation. Educational workers in our schools have already been harassed. We know this is happening. So the question is then, what are we waiting for?

HB1888 is urgent because it creates real accountability. It requires the Department of Education to respond, investigate, and document harassment instead of allowing it to be handled informally or ignored altogether. Without clear responsibility, educators are left exposed—and that failure has consequences.

This issue is personal to me. I have been threatened, and it caused a significant impact on my life and my career as an educator. The fear did not end when the school day ended. It affected my mental health, my sense of safety, and my ability to fully serve my students. No educator should be expected to sacrifice their well-being just to do their job.

When harassment goes unanswered, educators burn out, leave the profession, and schools lose stability. And when educators are unsafe, students are unsafe.

Accountability protects everyone. HB1888 makes it clear that harassment will be taken seriously and that those responsible for responding cannot look the other way.

I urge you to support HB1888—not later, not after another incident, but now. Our educators deserve protection, and our children deserve schools where safety is not optional.

Inger Stonehill

**Testimony in Support of HB1888
Relating to the Safety of Educational Workers
House Committee on Education
February 3, 2025 | 2:00 p.m.**

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

Last session, before the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs, I asked: when educational workers face repeated harassment and threats, at what point does it demand real action? On December 4, 2025, at Moanalua High School and in its aftermath, we saw what can happen when risk is allowed to escalate.

In 2022, the Department of Education (DOE) introduced legislation focused on elevating harassment-related charges. In doing so, the Department acknowledged, through testimony from its employees, principals, and leadership, that harassment by members of the public was a growing and serious problem. What did not follow was the establishment of workable procedures to protect employees and guide schools on how to respond when harassment occurred.

Years later, that gap remains. There is still no defined, operational process that tells schools, complex areas, or state offices how to respond when harassment happens. When institutions fail to act, harassment is allowed to continue and its impact compounds over time. Prolonged psychological abuse, intimidation, and stalking cause real and lasting injury. These experiences are associated with post-traumatic stress, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and long-term health conditions. Harm does not suddenly become real only when someone is physically injured.

Trauma research uses the term “institutional betrayal” to describe the additional damage caused when a trusted authority or organization minimizes, ignores, or fails to respond to abusive behavior. Studies directly link institutional betrayal to more severe post-traumatic stress symptoms. I have advocated for this bill to reduce that damage and to ensure educational workers receive a reliable and appropriate response from DOE leadership when abuse occurs.

Over the years, I have spoken with many people across different government agencies who experienced harassment and abuse on the job. While each situation is unique, the impact has been strikingly similar. People describe the same anxiety, fear, and isolation after reporting the behavior to leadership. Instead of receiving support, they were left to manage the consequences on their own, compounding the trauma. Some, like me, ultimately changed jobs due to retaliation after reporting, concerns for personal safety, or both.

In my own case, the harassment did not end when I left my job. After a court-issued, three-year injunction against harassment expired, the online posts and behavior continued and clearly fit recognized patterns of stalking and harassment up until very recently. That persistence is what occurs when there are no meaningful consequences and no effective response system. When behavior goes unchecked, perpetrators are emboldened and more people are put at risk.

What my experience shows is not just personal injury, but a systemic failure. When harassment is not met with consequences and a coordinated response, it continues. HB1888 is intended to address that failure. It focuses on what happens after harassment occurs by establishing procedures, meaningful support, and accountability. It recognizes that prevention alone is not enough.

I also want to acknowledge that the Senate introduced SB3179, which addresses many of the same concerns as HB1888. While it is not a formal companion, approximately 80% of its language mirrors this bill, reflecting shared recognition across chambers that current DOE systems are insufficient.

I respectfully encourage the House to consider aligning the two measures, where appropriate, to ensure the success of this important legislation. A few minor suggested examples include:

- Section 2 §302A- (c)

An educational worker who seeks judicial protection from harassment, as provided for in section 711-1106, ~~because of the educational worker's position as an educational worker~~, including obtaining a temporary restraining order, shall be entitled to a leave of absence with pay to attend court proceedings related to the protection; **provided that the educational worker shall provide documentation to the department verifying the court-related leave of absence**; provided that for those employees included in bargaining units pursuant to section 89-6, such leave must be negotiated pursuant to section 89-9(a). The duration of the leave of absence with pay shall be reasonable and sufficient to allow the educational worker to fulfill their court-related obligations.

- Section 2 §302A- (d)(1)

Conduct a formal investigation of all incidents of harassment submitted to the department by an educational worker pursuant to subsection (b); **provided that for the purposes of this paragraph, "formal internal investigation" does not include an investigation conducted by a contracted third party**;

- Understanding the complexities around staffing, I would also understand the removal of the following to align with SB3179. However, this makes the creation and implementation of a safety plan for employees experiencing harassment, threats or assault crucial if they will be required to work under these conditions.

Section 2 §302A- (a)

~~An educational worker shall not be required to work under conditions or perform tasks when the educational worker is being subjected to harassment, as provided for in section 711-1106, because of the educational worker's position as an educational worker.~~

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify, and thank you to this committee and to Representative Woodson for prioritizing the safety of educational workers.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Chambers

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 12:23:21 PM

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

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson and Members of the House Education Committee,

I strongly support HB1888. This has been a long-standing issue that has impacted schools and support offices, despite efforts to address the problem. The harassment and threats to safety of education workers impacts their primary focus on the education and well-being of students.

Please move this bill forward and continue the important discussion. Thank you for working to make a difference for the keiki and educators in our state.

Sincerely,

Catherine H. Payne, Retired Educator

HB-1888

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 5:43:12 PM

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

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

1888 HB RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.	EDN	309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE	Feb 3, 2026 2:00 PM
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HB-1888

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 8:25:08 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committeemembers,

We need to better protect our education workers. This bill advances that goal. Let's get it passed.

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 10:43:51 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taren Taguchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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.

HB1888 is important because it creates clarity and accountability when harassment occurs. By establishing clear expectations for investigation, documentation, and response, the bill helps ensure that concerns are taken seriously and addressed consistently rather than handled informally or in isolation. This kind of structure helps prevent situations from escalating and promotes safer, more stable school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the mental health and well-being of educational workers. When educators are fearful or burned out due to unresolved safety concerns, they cannot fully thrive in their roles. When educational workers are unable to thrive, neither will our students.

Keeping educators safe helps keep our children safe. When the Department of Education is accountable for responding to and documenting harassment, schools are better equipped to support their staff and maintain a secure learning environment for students.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888 to help ensure safer schools for both educational workers and the children they serve.

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 5:23:34 PM

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

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

Comments:

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

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Keeping educators safe helps keep our children safe. When the Department of Education is accountable for responding to and documenting harassment, schools are better equipped to support their staff and maintain a secure learning environment for students.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888 to help ensure safer schools for both educational workers and the children they serve.

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 8:30:49 PM

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

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

Comments:

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

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Keeping educators safe helps keep our children safe. When the Department of Education is accountable for responding to and documenting harassment, schools are better equipped to support their staff and maintain a secure learning environment for students.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888 to help ensure safer schools for both educational workers and the children they serve.

Sincerely,

Tara Taitano-Goo

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:16:28 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Co Le Vavul	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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.

HB1888 is important because it creates clarity and accountability when harassment occurs. By establishing clear expectations for investigation, documentation, and response, the bill helps ensure that concerns are taken seriously and addressed consistently rather than handled informally or in isolation. This kind of structure helps prevent situations from escalating and promotes safer, more stable school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the mental health and well-being of educational workers. When educators are fearful or burned out due to unresolved safety concerns, they cannot fully thrive in their roles. When educational workers are unable to thrive, neither will our students.

Keeping educators safe helps keep our children safe. When the Department of Education is accountable for responding to and documenting harassment, schools are better equipped to support their staff and maintain a secure learning environment for students.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888 to help ensure safer schools for both educational workers and the children they serve.

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:41:00 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krislyn Hashimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Krislyn Hashimoto, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB1888 as an ally to educators and school staff.

While I am not an educational worker myself, I have close friends and family members who are. I have seen firsthand how harassment, threats, and a lack of institutional support can take a serious toll on their mental health and overall well-being. When educators, or anyone for that matter, feel that their personal safety or the safety of their families is in jeopardy, that fear does not disappear when they leave work for the day. It is an inescapable feeling that follows them home, into the very spaces where they should feel most safe. No one should have to live in constant vigilance simply because they went to work to care for our children.

What makes HB1888 so important is that it requires the Department of Education to take responsibility for supporting its employees when harm occurs on the job. For too long, educators have been told that harassment or assault is a “private legal matter,” leaving them to navigate the legal system alone. For many, especially those who cannot afford an attorney, this means having no real protection at all.

HB1888 creates clarity and accountability by establishing clear expectations for how harassment is documented, investigated, and addressed. This consistency matters. When concerns are taken seriously and handled appropriately, it helps prevent escalation and creates safer, more stable school environments for everyone.

Educators take care of our keiki every day. They show up with patience, compassion, and commitment, often under extremely challenging circumstances. If we expect them to care for our children, we must also care for them. Supporting the safety and mental health of educational workers is not optional, it is essential to the health of our school communities.

Keeping educators safe helps keep our keiki safe. I respectfully urge you to support HB1888 and affirm that educational workers deserve protection, dignity, and support from their employer.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Krislyn Hashimoto

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:41:08 AM

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

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

Comments:

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

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.

HB1888 is important because it creates clarity and accountability when harassment occurs. By establishing clear expectations for investigation, documentation, and response, the bill helps ensure that concerns are taken seriously and addressed consistently rather than handled informally or in isolation. This kind of structure helps prevent situations from escalating and promotes safer, more stable school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the mental health and well-being of educational workers. When educators are fearful or burned out due to unresolved safety concerns, they cannot fully thrive in their roles. When educational workers are unable to thrive, neither will our students.

Keeping educators safe helps keep our children safe. When the Department of Education is accountable for responding to and documenting harassment, schools are better equipped to support their staff and maintain a secure learning environment for students.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888 to help ensure safer schools for both educational workers and the children they serve.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Noelle Tavares-Sumiye

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:55:26 AM

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

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

Comments:

I support this bill. Our keiki are our future. Teachers are woefully undervalued. If we're not going to pay them what they deserve, we should at least adopt policies that show them we have their backs when an overbearing parent gets out of line.

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 12:25:35 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Goo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

We all know that for our kids to have a great school year, the adults running the school need to be at their best, too. But right now, when teachers or staff face threats, we have some uncertainty about how to best protect ourselves legally.

That is why HB1888 is so important. It reduces the uncertainty. This bill guarantees that there is a reliable process in place where incidents are addressed with a clear roadmap. We need a system like this to empower the highest level of collaboration to effectively deal with bad behavior. I don't want to add any more work for any HDOE employee, but for these issues, clarity is critical. It's simple: safe educators mean safe classrooms, and you're helping us get back to doing what we love: teaching and supporting Hawaii's children. Please support HB1888.

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 12:53:06 PM

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

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

Comments:

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

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.

HB1888 is important because it creates clarity and accountability when harassment occurs. By establishing clear expectations for investigation, documentation, and response, the bill helps ensure that concerns are taken seriously and addressed consistently rather than handled informally or in isolation. This kind of structure helps prevent situations from escalating and promotes safer, more stable school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the mental health and well-being of educational workers. When educators are fearful or burned out due to unresolved safety concerns, they cannot fully thrive in their roles. When educational workers are unable to thrive, neither will our students.

Keeping educators safe helps keep our children safe. When the Department of Education is accountable for responding to and documenting harassment, schools are better equipped to support their staff and maintain a secure learning environment for students.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888 to help ensure safer schools for both educational workers and the children they serve.

Sincerely,

Andrea Oka

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:34:21 PM

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

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

Comments:

Our educational workers should not be subject to harassment of any kind and HB 1888 would establish a process for the Dept of Education to take steps to report this unacceptable behavior.

Please support HB 1888. Thank you.

Ted Meehan

HB-1888

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 3:17:26 PM

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

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

Comments:

TESTIMONY ON H.B. 1888

Relating to the Safety of Educational Workers

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

My name is **Joel Kawachi**, and I serve as the Athletic Director at **Moanalua High School** within the Department of Education. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on **House Bill 1888**, relating to the safety and protection of educational workers.

At the outset, I want to be clear that **I support the overall intent of this bill** and appreciate the Legislature’s continued focus on addressing harassment, threats, and assaults directed toward educational workers. These incidents are real, increasing, and deeply disruptive—not only to employees, but to the learning environments we are responsible for maintaining.

There are **several provisions of this bill that I strongly support**.

First, I support the provision that allows **paid time off for educational workers who are pursuing temporary restraining orders or other judicial protections** related to harassment. Navigating court proceedings is stressful, time-consuming, and often unavoidable for victims. Ensuring that employees are not forced to choose between their personal safety and their livelihood is both humane and appropriate.

Second, I appreciate the bill’s emphasis on **additional supports for victims**, including investigations, reporting requirements, emergency safety planning, and training in de-escalation techniques. These measures acknowledge that harassment is not just a legal issue, but a workplace safety issue that requires proactive, coordinated responses.

That said, I respectfully offer **a few questions and considerations** as the Legislature continues to refine this measure:

- **Implementation clarity:** From an operational standpoint, schools will need clear guidance on how investigations, reporting timelines, and emergency safety plans are to be carried out at the school level. Additional clarity on roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority would help ensure consistency and prevent delays.

- **Capacity and resources:** Many administrators already manage complex responsibilities related to safety, discipline, and crisis response. I encourage consideration of whether schools and complex areas will receive adequate training, staffing support, or centralized assistance to carry out these new requirements effectively.
- **Coordination with existing procedures:** It would be helpful to understand how these new processes will align with existing DOE protocols, collective bargaining agreements, and law enforcement partnerships, so that reporting and response efforts are streamlined rather than duplicative.

These questions are offered **in the spirit of strengthening the bill**, not opposing it. From my perspective, **HB 1888 represents an important step forward** in recognizing that harassment and threats against educational workers must be addressed systematically, compassionately, and with real institutional support.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and for considering the practical realities faced by schools as this legislation moves forward. I respectfully look forward to continued discussion and refinement of this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,
Joel Kawachi
Athletic Director
Moanalua High School