



STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 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: HB1895, RELATING TO EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.

Purpose of Bill: Includes the disruption or interference with the administration or functions of any school, school administration office, or school board in the offense of harassment. Elevates the penalty for harassment to a misdemeanor when the recipient is an educational worker.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 1895, which addresses extreme conduct that intentionally harasses educational workers or obstructs the functions of a school, school administration office, or school board. The bill aims to protect all educational workers from severe, persistent, or threatening behavior, ensuring a safe and more stable learning environment. Additionally, it updates the legal definition of harassment to include the disruption or interference with the normal operations of schools, administrative offices, or boards, providing clearer, stronger legal recourse for victims. By reducing disruptive, non-productive conflict, the bill allows educators to focus on their primary duties, ensuring school operations and student learning are not compromised. Lastly, the proposed legislation is designed to target only harmful, excessive actions, explicitly stating it is not intended to restrict legitimate good-faith communication, parental advocacy, or participation in school matters.

HB 1895 aligns with the Department's commitment to ensuring a safe, secure, and respectful environment for its employees. Furthermore, the bill enables the operations and functions of any school, school administration office, or school board to continue without disruption or interference.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to HB 1895.



HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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President

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Cheney Kaku
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Andrea Eshelman
Executive Director

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Item: **HB 1895 - RELATING TO 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 **supports HB 1895** as we believe that for schools to thrive, all educational workers must feel safe, and protected.

Recently, the news has shown us examples of why this legislation matters, making it critical that the legislature act. 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 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 1895.

Mahalo.



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 03, 2026

H.B. 1895 — RELATING TO EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports H.B. 1895, which includes the disruption or interference with the administration or functions of any school, school administration office, or school board in the offense of harassment. It also seeks to elevate the penalty for harassment to a misdemeanor when the recipient is an educational worker.

Our public schools in Hawaii are not immune to the increase in harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence against schools nationwide. Every school year, we are informed by our members of threats made directly at them or witnessed by them in the course of their employment and within the scope of their duties and responsibilities. These threats and disruptions occur in school facilities, at meetings, over the phone, via email, and through social media. We strongly support any efforts to increase protection for our educational workers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1895.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

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**STATE OF HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**

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February 2, 2026

HB1895: RELATING TO EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

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

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD) **opposes HB1895**. This measure seeks to amend Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) § 711-1106 to add to the acts, which constitute harassment, a subsection that addresses disrupting or interfering with the functions of any school, school administration office, or school board, and makes a violation of HRS § 711-1106 a full misdemeanor (as opposed to a petty misdemeanor) when the recipient is an educational worker.

At the outset, HB1895 is unconstitutional as it violates persons' rights under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and article I, section 4 of the Hawai'i Constitution. Parents, students, or community members must be able to approach school officials or provide testimony at Board meetings. Parents, students, or community members should be able to hold peaceful protests at schools or meetings. Instead, such conduct, which is protected under the U.S. and Hawai'i constitutions, would be subject to criminal prosecution. Issues that arise at schools and school functions are often emotional and personal. Parents advocate for their children or communities on issues that affect families and lives. Persons would be hesitant to communicate open and frankly with board members or school officials for fear that they might cross the invisible line between constitutionally protected communications and expressions and prohibited conduct.

HB1895 would also be unconstitutionally vague and overbroad.¹ While the measure claims that it “is not intended to restrict good faith communication, parental advocacy, or participation in school matters,” it does not provide a clear, objective, constitutional basis by which these legitimate communications can be clearly and definitively separated from prohibited acts. The lack of any unambiguous and definitively delineated bright line standards would chill open and frank discussions between stakeholders and the board and school officials because persons would not have plain notice of what communications or conduct are permitted and which are prohibited – this makes the measure unconstitutionally vague. The measure is also unconstitutionally overbroad as it would act to criminalize constitutionally protected speech. Discourse at Board hearings and between parents and school officials can at times become adversarial or heated. The lack of any objective, bright-line rule between when speech is protected and prohibited would result in protected speech being criminalized. When would a parent advocating for changes or protesting actions by a school or the board cross the line between “good faith communication, parental advocacy or participation in school matters” and disrupting or interfering with the administration or functions of that board? Without such clear and objective standards, the measure would prohibit protected speech and therefore be unconstitutionally overbroad.

HB1895 would also violate the Bylaws of the Hawai‘i State Board of Education. The Bylaws of the Hawai‘i State Board of Education, Article VII, “Public Testimony and Submission of Data, Views, or Arguments,” requires that the Board “accept data, views, and arguments submitted in writing,” and that “all interested persons [be given] an opportunity to present testimony on any item of the agenda[.]” Under the broad and vague language of the measure, some speech or communications would be prohibited in direct violation of the Bylaws.

Finally, HB1895 is unnecessary. HRS § 711-1106 sets forth six specific types of prohibited conduct that constitute harassment. A person who engages in such conduct against an educational worker can already be prosecuted for harassment in a legal and constitutional manner.² Adding an additional, unconstitutional

¹ A statute is unconstitutionally overbroad when it affects constitutionally-protected freedom of expression or “reaches a substantial amount of constitutionally-protected conduct[.]” State v. Pacquing, 139 Hawai‘i 302, 309, 389 P.3d 897, 904 (2016). A statute is void for vagueness when it does not define a criminal offense with sufficient definiteness so that ordinary people can understand what conduct is prohibited and in a manner that does not encourage arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement. Id. at 314, 389 P.3d 16 909.

² See In Interest of Doe, 76 Hawai‘i 85, 869 P.2d 1304 (1994) (discussing which types of conduct and speech may be constitutionally prohibited under the harassment statute).

subsection, which is already encompassed by the preceding subsections, is not necessary.

The OPD supports protection of the safety and well-being of Hawai‘i’s educational workers. School administrators, teachers, counselors, and other educational staff should not be subjected to severe harassment, intimidation, and disruptive conduct in the course of their employment. However, educational workers are already protected from such illegal conduct under current statutes for harassment, assault, and terroristic threatening. Therefore, HB1895 has a laudable purpose, but it is unnecessary and unconstitutional. The OPD supports the sentiment and purpose of HB1895, but not its implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

KEITH HAYASHI
SUPERINTENDENT



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

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

Department: Education
Person Testifying: Derek Minakami, NBCT, Principal of Kāne'ohe Elementary School
Title of Bill: HB1895 RELATING TO 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.

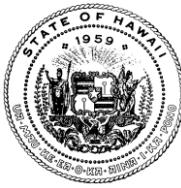
Sadly, today, teachers, administrators, educational assistants, and other educational workers face harassment, intimidation, and threats to their safety without any deterrent powerful enough to shelter them from harm. The assault suffered by Moanalua High School Associate Athletic Director Natalie Iwamoto 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.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
415 S. BERETANIA ST. #415
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813**

Testimony on H.B. 1895

RELATING TO EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

Representative Justin Woodson, Chair

Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

House Committee on Education

February 3, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.; Room Number: 309

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) **Supports** H.B. 1895, Relating to Educational Workers and defers to the Department of Education (DOE).

The mission of the OWR is to strengthen state systems and services by advancing hope-centered principles and supporting Hawai'i's transition toward becoming a trauma-informed state.

Safety—both physical and psychological—is a foundational principle of trauma-informed care¹. Workplace physical environment and safety is also a core domain of worker well-being. Research consistently links worker wellbeing to outcomes including worker retention, productivity, absenteeism, and both physical and mental health². When educational workers

¹ SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-informed Approach. (n.d.). [Www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/dbhis/samhsas-concept-trauma-guidance-trauma-informed-approach).
<https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/dbhis/samhsas-concept-trauma-guidance-trauma-informed-approach>

² Chari, R., Sauter, S. L., Petrun Sayers, E. L., Huang, W., Fisher, G. G., & Chang, C.-C. (2022). Development of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Worker Well-Being Questionnaire. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 64(8), 707–717. <https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000002585>

experience persistent harassment, threats, or hostile conduct, the foundation of safety is compromised for both the individual and the entire school community.

Protecting educational workers is not separate from protecting students—it is essential to it. This bill takes an important step toward ensuring our schools can be the safe, healing-centered environments our keiki and valuable staff deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Tia L.R. Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA
Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience



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 HB1895 – 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** HB1895, which adds the disruption or interference with the administration or functions of any school, school administration office, or school board in the offense of harassment and elevates the penalty for harassment to a misdemeanor when the recipient is an educational worker.

Given recent events and the apparent rise in incidents of harassment targeting educational workers, it seems evident, unfortunately, that legislation like this is necessary to protect the rights and dignity of the hard-working employees who are dedicated to the success of our schools and the education of Hawaii’s students. This bill attempts to address this growing issue, and we humble request that the committee pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1895.

HB-1895

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 5:40:55 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

1895 HB RELATING TO EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.	EDN	309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE	Feb 3, 2026 2:00 PM
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HB-1895

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 9:43:19 PM
Testimony for EDN on 2/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I submit this testimony in support of HB1895, both as a parent and as a former educational worker who experienced severe harassment while carrying out my duties at the Department of Education (DOE).

As a parent, I believe in advocating for my child. Families should feel empowered to raise concerns, ask questions, and work collaboratively with schools in the best interest of their children. I have done so myself. At no point did I feel the need to cross the line into conduct that is statutorily defined as illegal. Strong advocacy and respectful communication can and should coexist.

As a former DOE employee, I have also seen the other side of this issue. I experienced firsthand how persistent harassment, intimidation, and disruptive behavior can create fear, derail daily operations, and make it difficult for schools to carry out their legally required duties. This kind of conduct does not advance student outcomes. It harms educational workers, destabilizes school environments, and ultimately impacts students as well.

This bill is important because it draws a clear and reasonable line. It does not take away free speech rights, restrict good-faith communication, or limit parental involvement in school matters. Instead, it addresses illegal behavior as defined by state law, including extreme conduct that intentionally harasses educational workers or interferes with the functioning of schools, school administration offices, or school boards.

Educational workers deserve to do their jobs without fear of intimidation or disruption. When harassment is allowed to escalate unchecked, it contributes to burnout, staff shortages, and instability across our public school system. Holding individuals accountable when conduct crosses into what is clearly illegal helps protect school communities while preserving appropriate space for respectful advocacy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-1895

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:58:01 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. I feel like an old fogey saying this, but back in my day, I felt like there was an understanding between parents and teachers that they were on the same team and the kids were the one who needed to be checked/controlled. If a child complained about their teacher, the parents would give the adults in the room the benefit of the doubt and tell their kid to get in line and obey the authority figure. Now when a child complains, too many parents automatically put blame on the teachers. We need to remind these parents that sometimes it's best to just butt out and let the adults be in charge.

HB-1895

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:22:03 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 committee members,

My name is Andrea Oka, and I respectfully submit testimony in support of HB1895, relating to educational workers.

HB1895 strengthens protections for educational workers by including the disruption or interference with the administration or functions of any school, school administration office, or school board in the offense of harassment, and by elevating the penalty for harassment to a misdemeanor when the recipient is an educational worker. This bill recognizes the vital role that teachers, administrators, counselors, and support staff play in our public education system and responds to concerning trends in hostile and obstructive conduct that impede their ability to serve students effectively.

By clarifying and enhancing legal protections for educational workers, HB 1895 helps ensure safer, more respectful environments in our schools and supports the well-being and professional duties of those dedicated to educating and serving Hawaii's keiki.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB1895.

Sincerely,

Andrea Oka

Sincerely,

Andrea Oka

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

Re: HB1895 – Relating to Educational Workers

Position: Support with Comments

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

Educational workers are essential to the effective operation of our public schools. **HB1895** is vital because it addresses extreme conduct—including threats and disruptive behavior—that impedes a school's ability to carry out its duties. By elevating penalties for harassment against educational workers to a misdemeanor, this bill fosters a safer environment for staff and students alike.

Comments on Administrative Efficiency

To ensure these protections do not create an undue administrative burden, I urge the Committee to consider the following:

- **System Integration:** The Department of Education should utilize existing electronic reporting platforms to track "disruption or interference" incidents, avoiding redundant manual paperwork.
- **Clear Thresholds:** Establishing standardized definitions for "disruptive interference" will help administrators prioritize high-risk threats while protecting good-faith parental advocacy.
- **Flexible Training:** To protect instructional time, the Department should use asynchronous online modules or "train-the-trainer" models for any required safety training.
- **Centralized Oversight:** Given the broad definition of "educational worker," designating a central office to coordinate these cases will ensure consistency and prevent individual schools from being overwhelmed.

Closing: Protecting our educators is a prerequisite for a secure learning environment. I support **HB1895** with comments focused on efficient, streamlined implementation.

Respectfully,



Alisa Bender



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 586-8126 Fax: 586-8129
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov

February 3, 2026

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*
Ms. Susan Wood, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Dominique Anders
Ms. Kathie Awaya
Ms. Virginia Beringer
Mr. Will Carlson
Ms. Annette Cooper
Mr. Mark Dishner
Dr. Natalie Haggerty
Ms. Stacy Haitsuka
Ms. Mai Hall
Ms. Melissa Johnson
Ms. Tina King
Ms. Dale Matsuura
Ms. Cheryl Matthews
Ms. Jessica McCullum
Ms. Siena Molina
Ms. Trish Moniz
Ms. Cherine Pai
Ms. Kiele Pennington
Mr. Christopher Pelayo
Ms. Kau'i Rezentes
Ms. Rosie Rowe
Dr. Scott Shimabukuro
Mr. Herbert Taitingfong
Mr. Steven Vannatta
Ms. Lisa Vegas
Ms. Jasmine Williams

Ms. Helen Kaniho, *liaison to
the Superintendent*
Ms. Wendy Nakasone-Kalani,
*liaison to the military
community*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Committee on Education
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 1895 - RELATING TO EDUCATION

Dear Representative Woodson and Members of the Committee,

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Council under the Individual's with Disabilities Act (IDEA) has **serious reservations** about **HB 1895** that includes the disruption or interference with the administration or functions of any school, school administration office, or school board in the offense of harassment, and elevates the penalty for harassment to a misdemeanor when the recipient is an educational worker. The language in this bill is nearly identical to that in **HB 2125** introduced in the 2022 legislative session which was strongly opposed by the special education community and ultimately defeated. SEAC concerns include:

Existing harassment law provides a better vehicle for addressing harassment to educational workers. The members of SEAC believe strongly in the safety of teachers, school personnel and any person on a school campus. While no one disputes that school personnel should be protected from anyone making harassing threats to their personal safety or that of their families, SEAC does not believe HB 1895 as written is either enforceable or necessary. Hawaii's existing harassment statute, HRS §711-1106, has clear definitions and ample case law to provide protection to victims of harassment while at the same time preserving the rights of citizens to engage in political expression.

The proposed classification of harassment of an educational worker law as a misdemeanor would impose significantly harsher penalties than the existing harassment law. In Hawaii, misdemeanors are punishable by up to one year in prison and a fine of up to \$2,000. Current harassment law, by contrast, is classified as a petty misdemeanor, punishable by up to 30 days in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000. Even if a parent is ultimately cleared of the charge of committing harassment of an educational worker, he or



she would have been significantly harmed financially and emotionally by being arrested, having to find legal counsel, child care for their children, etc.

Special education parents may be improperly targeted for the harassment misdemeanor. The Department's justification in 2022 of the need for HB 2125 focused on the perceived interference by some special education parents with a school's operations by refusing to accept legal notices for hearing, emails, telephone notifications or written notifications, thereby forcing the Department to be out of compliance with federal and state laws for timeliness. However, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) offers adequate protections to schools while at the same time placing a high value of the participation of parents in their child's education.

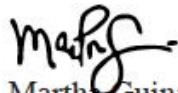
The Department has provided very little data to justify serious legal action against parents. Over the past four years since HB 2125 was introduced, the Department has provided few statistics to warrant the enactment of this law. SEAC believes the number of special education parents whose actions could be construed as interfering or disrupting school functions to be very small. We recommend that your Committee requests data from the Department regarding the number of cases of harassment, their frequency, the types of actions, the responses to the actions, whether police reports or complaints were made, etc., so that you can analyze the extent of the need and an appropriate solution.

Most importantly, SEAC is concerned that HB 1895 will negatively impact parent/school partnerships and potentially harm students with disabilities. As you know, SEAC is made up of a majority of parents of children with disabilities and individuals with disabilities. Many parents of children with disabilities, including a number of our SEAC members, are worried due to the vague language in HB 1895 that they could be punished with a serious fine or jail time, if they exercise their legal right to advocate on behalf of their child with a disability. It has long been documented throughout the nation that special education parents in particular fear retaliation, if they speak up for their child's rights. This bill adds a chilling reminder of that threat and may silence many families from advocating for the individualized services and supports that their child needs to succeed.

For all the reasons stated above, SEAC urges your committee to seriously consider the negative impact this bill can have on families of students with disabilities. Hasty legislation without a foundation of well-analyzed data and clear definitions does not ensure either protection or justice.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns regarding this controversial and potentially harmful legislation.

Respectfully,


Martha Guinan
Chair

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

HB-1895

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:23:39 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:

Educational workdes and administrators need to feel safe at school or in an administrative capacity. This bill supports this safety initiative.

Please support HB 1895. Thank you.

Ted Meehan