



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

Date: 03/30/2026
Time: 01:00 PM
Location: CR 229 & Videoconference
Committee: EDU

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: GM509, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, KOMAREY MOSS, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully supports the nomination of Ms. Komarey Reuth Kao Moss, as set forth in Governor's Message 509.

Ms. Moss brings extensive experience in public education, leadership, and school administration, with a strong record of advancing student achievement and supporting school communities. She currently serves as Principal of Moanalua Middle School and previously served as Principal of Red Hill Elementary, where she successfully led a military-impacted school through the COVID-19 pandemic and the Red Hill water contamination crisis, ensuring continuity of learning and prioritizing the safety and well-being of students and staff.

Throughout her career, Ms. Moss has demonstrated a commitment to educational excellence, including her work as a vice principal, district educational specialist, and teacher. In addition, her experience in strategic planning, data-driven decision-making, and systems-level support reflects a comprehensive understanding of the Department's mission and operations.

The Department believes Ms. Moss' experience, professionalism, and dedication to student success make her well-qualified for this nomination, and we are confident she will be a valuable asset in this role.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this nomination.

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

ITEM: GM 509 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board, Gubernatorial Nominee, KOMAREY MOSS.

POSITION: OPPOSE

HEARING: Monday, March 30, 2026, 1:00 pm, Conference Room 229

SUBMITTED BY: Wendy Kalaekoa Akioka, Kumu Kaiapuni, Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o PŪ'Ōhala

Dear Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee,

I am writing to formally express my **opposition to the appointment of Komarey Moss to the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board (HTSB)**. While I acknowledge Ms. Moss's recognized leadership during the Red Hill water crisis and her responsiveness to the community during that period, my concerns regarding her appointment stem from her history of failing to support and professionally cultivate the teaching force.

The HTSB's mission is to maintain high standards for the profession, which requires a deep understanding of the challenges educators face. Based on the following points, I believe Ms. Moss's leadership style is not in alignment to that mission:

- **Irregularities in the Educator Effectiveness System (EES):** During her tenure at Red Hill Elementary, Ms. Moss placed a probationary teacher, who reached out to me for help. This teacher was put on a "principal-directed" EES plan within Ms. Moss's first quarter as administrator. This action was taken despite the teacher having previously received a "Satisfactory" rating and was done without the requisite evidence or explanation usually required for such an escalation.
- **Punitive Response to Global Crisis:** During the Spring 2020 COVID-19 shutdown, while the majority of educators struggled with the unprecedented pivot to distance learning, Ms. Moss reportedly used these systemic challenges as a basis for issuing a poor performance rating for the teacher. Such actions demonstrate a disregard for the real-world obstacles teachers face and suggest a lack of the empathy required for a standards-setting body.
- **Patterns of Workplace Culture:** More than one educator has voiced a feeling of being targeted for being an older teacher. Furthermore, during her time at Moanalua Middle School, Ms. Moss issued an administrative letter to a Social Studies teacher regarding the facilitation of relevant but controversial classroom discussions. This letter was only withdrawn after the threat of legal action regarding the suppression of First Amendment

rights. A member of the HTSB should not be known to foster oppression, nor should they have a reputation for being difficult to work with.

The HTSB needs members who foster a supportive, fair, and legally sound environment for Hawaii's educators. Ms. Moss's documented history of administrative overreach and her sometimes strained relationship with the teaching faculty make her an unsuitable candidate for this specific role.

Mahalo a nui loa,

Wendy Kalaekoa Akioka

Kumu Kaiapuni, Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o PŪ'Ōhala