



**STATE OF HAWAII
BOARD OF EDUCATION
PAPA HO'ONA'AUAO**
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

House Committee on Finance
Tuesday, March 3, 2026
2:00 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 308

Measure: House Bill 1595 HD1, Relating to the State Librarian

Purpose of Measure:

Repeals the salary cap for the state librarian. Effective 7/1/3000.

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

The Board of Education (Board) is in strong support of House Bill 1595 HD1, which repeals the salary cap for the state librarian.

The salary cap of the state librarian was last increased to the current amount of \$175,000 seven years ago, through Act 224, Session Laws of Hawaii 2019. The prior increase was almost a decade earlier, from \$85,302 to \$120,000, through Act 117, Session Laws of Hawaii 2001.

The Board respectfully offers the following:

- During the years since the salary cap was last adjusted, Hawaii and the entire nation have experienced significant inflation.
- The inability to offer an increased salary will impact future contracts with the state librarian and hinder future recruitment.
 - Despite the state librarian's continual demonstration of dedication and efforts to improve Hawaii's public library system and historically high ratings on annual evaluations, the Board was not able to consider a salary increase in her most recent contract renewal due to the salary cap.

- The proposed legislation allows for flexibility to make salary adjustments that align with the Board's policy regarding compensation philosophy for the state librarian. The Board wished to establish a compensation philosophy to ensure consistency in the approach to the salaries of this key position. Board Policy 600-8, adopted on August 14, 2025, explains the principles that shall guide the Board's determination of compensation: equity and transparency, fiscal responsibility, deep respect for the content in which we operate, total compensation approach, and market competitiveness.
- The Board has utilized an annual evaluation process to review the state librarian's performance against a set of approved metrics and would like to continue with this process.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Board.

HB-1595-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:01:12 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Eaton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee.

My name is Carolyn Eaton and I am a resident of Honolulu. I am also a retired school librarian, graduate of the Master's program in Library and Information Studies at UH Manoa (1995).

I appreciate this opportunity to express strong support for repealing the salary cap for the State Librarian. The value of wise leadership in this position cannot be overestimated. Only Hawai'i has a statewide library system. The challenges for our State Librarian are unique and diverse.

Mahalo for your hard work to improve the lives of all our students, educators, including librarians, and lifelong learners.

HB-1595-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:54:03 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sabrina Nicole Thomas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill, it is well past due. This leadership position is vital for the quality of life of so many people.

HB-1595-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:06:06 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sunyeen Pai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony March 3, 2026 to House Committee on Finance in support of HB 1595 HD1, Relating to the State Librarian.

Dear esteemed members:

I am in support of this bill, given my career experience as a retired community college librarian who has worked with both 4-year universities and 2-year community colleges at the University of Hawai'i.

I am a little astonished that there is a cap on salary for this executive position, in contrast to other state executive positions with comparable responsibilities. Accountability to public service is already in place, given the fact that the Board of Education ultimately decides on the compensation that the State Librarian receives.

The statewide public library service is an integral part of all our communities. Our public libraries teach keiki to read, offer child-centered programs that support working parents, and serve as trusted sources of civic and democratic education for all ages. For residents without home internet access, libraries bridge the digital divide through free technology and training. And in times of crisis — from hurricanes to wildfires — our libraries have stepped up as community refuges, providing shelter, distributing emergency supplies, and connecting families with vital state and federal services.

When I visit my home library in Kaimuki (which I have used since elementary school), I am always impressed by how busy it is and how attentive staff are to my requests. My friends in other communities have similar reports of their libraries.

Please remove this outdated cap on salary.

With much aloha and mahalo,

Sunyeen (Sunny) Pai, PhD, Retired Professor and Librarian, Kapi'olani Community College