



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

Date: 02/17/2026

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: EDN

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB1634, RELATING TO EDUCATION EQUITY.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to permit the participation of eligible homeschooled students in public high school extracurricular activities, subject to certain requirements and limitations.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) recognizes the intent of HB1634. The Department respects parent-initiated educational alternatives and respectfully offers comments and strong concerns.

The [Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 8, Chapter 12](#), allows a compulsory attendance exception for students who are homeschooled, the current admin rule states, *"The parent(s) submitting a notice to homeschool a child shall be responsible for the child's total educational program including athletics and other co-curricular activities."*

Respectfully, it is a parent choice to homeschool their child, knowing what the responsibilities are which include any athletics and other co-curricular activities.

While it is understandable the homeschool parent may want their child to participate in high school athletics or co-curricular activities, these programs are part of the total public school experience, including developing school pride, camaraderie with team or club mates, opportunities for personal growth and contribution to their schools. For many of the public school students, athletics and co-curricular activities drive their motivation to attend school and keep up their grades. Allowing home school students to participate in a school's athletic or co-curricular program may likely "take away" a spot from a student who is enrolled and attends that school to join a team or other co-curricular activity. This may also have an impact on families of students at the public school, who cheer on and support their child and the school. The Department respectfully disagrees that it is an equity matter to allow homeschool students to participate in public high school sport events, as homeschool students have every opportunity to attend a public school.

The public school athletes must also meet grade point average requirements as determined by teacher grades to participate in athletic competitions and co-curricular

activities; there is an element of possible bias if the parent is providing the grades for eligibility for their own child. In addition, school athletic directors, coaches, club advisors and teachers know their students, and students are bound by existing disciplinary expectations and consequences. There may be possible safety concerns with non-school students participating in the school programs.

Schools receive funds based on a weighted student formula, and plan for the student body, which does not include funding for homeschools students. Costs for participation for sporting events are borne by the various leagues which are shared by the schools of that league and students may pay student activity fees at their school. Public school funds are required to be used for public school students.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:43:39 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Amy Bossler	O’ahu Inclusive co-op	Support	In Person

Comments:

Representative Justin H. Woodson

Hawai’i House of Representatives Education Committee

H.B. 1634

February 17, 2026

2pm, conference room 309

My name is Dr. Amy Bossler. I am a former licensed and highly qualified Hawai’i DOE educator and completed a Doctorate of Education in Exceptionalities Studies at the University of Hawai’i at Manoa in 2015.

I am testifying on behalf of the O’ahu Inclusive Co-op, a group of 194 families located in central O’ahu. We STRONGLY support H.B.1634.

Allowing homeschool students to participate in public school extracurricular activities isn’t about blurring lines — it’s about expanding opportunity while strengthening the whole community.

1. It Builds Stronger Community Ties

Homeschool families are part of the same neighborhoods, churches, sports leagues, and libraries as public school families.

2. It Strengthens Programs

Clubs, theater, band, robotics, and sports all thrive on numbers.

- More students can mean fuller teams
- Broader talent pools
- Greater diversity of strengths and perspectives
- Stronger competition and performance outcomes

Programs often struggle with funding and enrollment — homeschool participation can help sustain them.

3. It Expands Access to Specialized Resources

Public schools often have:

- Advanced science labs
- Athletic facilities
- Music programs
- Debate and academic teams

Homeschool families pay taxes too. Allowing participation ensures equitable access to community-funded opportunities.

4. It Encourages Well-Rounded Development

Extracurriculars build:

- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Time management
- Resilience
- Social confidence

These skills matter regardless of where a student receives academic instruction.

5. It Reflects Educational Freedom

Many states already allow this through “Tim Tebow laws,” named after Tim Tebow, who was homeschooled and played public high school football before going on to collegiate and professional athletics. The principle is simple: educational choice shouldn’t mean social isolation

6. It Can Be Structured Fairly

Concerns about fairness (eligibility, academic standards, funding) can be addressed with clear policies:

- Grade verification requirements
- Code of conduct agreements
- Participation fees where applicable
- Practice and attendance expectations

Many districts already have models that work smoothly.

in summary, this is not about public vs. homeschool. It’s about recognizing that kids are kids first, community members second, and education model third. When schools and homeschool families collaborate, students gain more opportunities, programs grow stronger, and communities benefit.

Please support HB1634.

Respectfully,

Dr. Amy M. Bossler and the O'ahu Inclusive Co-Op



MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

February 17, 2026

Honorable Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Honorable Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair
Committee on Education

Hawai'i House of Representatives
415 S Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: House Bill 1634 (Relating to Education Equity.)

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

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Defense and military families stationed in Hawai'i, I am writing to express our support for House Bill (HB) 1634, which requires the Department of Education to permit the participation of eligible homeschooled students in public high school extracurricular activities, subject to certain requirements and limitations.

Homeschooling for military families offers a stable and consistent educational environment for families, which in turn, allows parents to tailor instruction that not only meets the needs of their child, but ensures uninterrupted academic growth regardless of their location. Additionally, homeschooling provides many military families the flexibility to accommodate the most unique demands of a military career: frequent deployments, incredibly irregular schedules, and family separations due to training requirements and activations.

Military families homeschool their children at nearly twice the rate of civilian families, often due to the frequent relocations associated with Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves. These families face unique challenges, including adapting to varying state homeschool regulations, ensuring continuity in their children's education while remaining compliant with their new home and duty station; and accessing extracurricular activities and programs such as Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) programming.

There are currently twenty states that allow homeschooled students full access to public school interscholastic activities without requiring enrollment or special approval, recognizing that competitive sports and activities provide social connections and opportunities for excellence. For military families, this access helps children integrate into new communities with each PCS move and maintains continuity in extracurricular pursuits. School sports, among other organized programming, offers numerous benefits for children, fostering their physical, social, and emotional development. Curricular and co-curricular programming teach critical life skills such as teamwork, discipline, and leadership, which should not be denied to students simply because they pursue an alternative form of education.

We respectfully request your favorable consideration of HB 1634. Thank you for your continued support of our military families in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Kelli May Douglas
Defense-State Liaison Office
Pacific Southwest Region
Kelli.M.Douglas.civ@mail.mil
571-265-0075

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 8:12:36 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 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

Social skills engagement

1634 HB RELATING TO EDUCATION EQUITY.

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:42:27 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I KĀKO‘O this bill. As long as tax payers are funding education and cannot opt out, opportunities should be available for all students, homeschooled included.

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:42:47 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Plowman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Michael Plowman, and I am an actively engaged citizen, ‘Ewa Neighborhood Board member, ‘Ewa Beach Little League head coach, and advocate for educational freedom and parental rights in Hawai‘i.

I strongly support House Bill 1634. This bill promotes education equity by requiring the Department of Education to allow eligible homeschooled high school students to participate in public school extracurricular activities—such as sports, academic competitions, music, drama, and clubs—starting in the 2026-2027 school year. Homeschoolers would meet reasonable, fair requirements (address-based eligibility, documentation of homeschool status, compliance with health rules, liability waivers, and the same conduct/tryout standards as enrolled students), ensuring fairness while preserving parental choice in core education.

As a Little League coach, I see firsthand how team sports build character, teamwork, discipline, and lifelong skills—benefits that should be accessible to all qualifying students, including homeschoolers. Nationwide, most states already grant this access, recognizing it fosters social growth and community ties without undermining homeschool flexibility. In Hawai‘i, where such participation is currently limited, HB1634 would open meaningful opportunities for thousands of homeschool families, especially military households and rural Neighbor Islanders seeking balanced, enriching experiences for their teens.

This bill stands as a positive step toward inclusion, in welcome contrast to restrictive proposals that burden families. When a measure expands opportunities and respects parental rights, it deserves passage.

Please pass HB1634. Empower Hawai‘i’s homeschool families with fair access to extracurriculars.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Michael Plowman ‘Ewa Beach

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:48:52 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth King	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to the House of Representative Committee on Education,

My name is Beth King and I am a homeschooler and registered voter in Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i Island.

I am writing in support of HB 1634 relating to education equity for homeschool students relating to extracurricular activities.

We have many friends on the mainland who homeschool and their children enjoy participating in public school sports teams, drama, and clubs. It has long been a need in our state for the same equal access to these opportunities provided by our Department of Education and the local public schools.

In our household, we have four homeschooling students, several who enjoy sports, STEM, and one who is particularly inclined towards music and drama.

Last year, my middle schooler participated in Fish Tank engineering and design competition team program through Nextech Hawaii. She was on Team Holu, a homeschool group that became one of the five finalist teams that gave their Lightning Pitch presentations in Hilo. Twenty some teams participated, and of the five finalist teams selected, three of them were homeschool groups from different parts of our Island. This demonstrates that homeschooler are looking for extracurricular activities and competitions for their students to encourage their specific talents, interests, and growth.

Mahalo for supporting HB 1634 and providing equal access to all school-age children.

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:16:54 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Hossain	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I respectfully request support for this bill.

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:28:44 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Chou	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Rep. Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

RE: H.B. 1634

POSITION: Support

Aloha,

My name is Stephanie Chou, and I'm a homeschool parent on Oahu. I'm writing to voice support for H.B. 1634. Allowing homeschool students to participate in public school extracurricular activities isn't about blurring lines — it's about expanding opportunity while strengthening the whole community.

1. It Builds Stronger Community Ties

Homeschool families are part of the same neighborhoods, churches, sports leagues, and libraries as public school families.

Extracurriculars create shared spaces where students connect beyond academics.

More participation means stronger local relationships.

2. It Strengthens Programs

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The principle is simple:

Educational choice shouldn’t mean social isolation.

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In summary, this isn’t about public vs. homeschool.

It’s about recognizing that kids are kids first — community members second — and education

model third. When schools and homeschool families collaborate, students gain more opportunities, programs grow stronger, and communities benefit.

Mahalo,

Stephanie Chou

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:29:42 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Fant	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is an issue of equality and representation.

Currently, homeschool families pay the taxes that are required to support local public schools. Biut they do not receive the representation on public school sports teams and other extracurriculars.

This bill would give us the representation that our taxation should come with.

Homeschool families being included would also create more community cohesion that can only benefit our towns and cities, especially here on the Big Island.

Mahalo!

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:56:25 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Veronica Milford faavi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members,

I Veronica Milford Faavi am in full support of HB1634 to allow eligible homeschool keiki to participate in public high school sports and extracurricular activities.

This allows for :

- Access to community opportunities
- Social development
- Fairness for taxpaying families
- Academic flexibility + extracurricular inclusion
- Encourages healthy activity
- Supports mental health
- Builds school–community bridges
- Doesn't require full enrollment
- Promotes inclusivity

I respectfully ask you to consider the importance of allowing homeschool students equitable access to public extracurricular opportunities. Mahalo for your time and service.

Veronica Milford Faavi.

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 11:16:24 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lawrence Serrano	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1634 poses a significant challenge to the educational freedom cherished by many families here in Hawaii. Requiring all homeschoolers to participate in statewide testing at public schools would needlessly restrict our ability to tailor education to our children's specific needs and learning style.

We chose homeschooling precisely for the flexibility it offers. Hawaii's current law wisely acknowledges that educational plans should consider a child's individual interests, needs, and abilities.

This proposed legislation would impose uniform, one-size-fits-all expectations on all homeschooled students and we all know that this approach does not work.

Our children are thriving homeschooling children through our homeschool community involvement, church involvement and other extracurricular activities like sports and scouting.

We pray that the committee opposes this bill and not impose unnecessary hardship to homeschooling families like ours.

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:55:37 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alana Sooriyakumar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:29:38 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa BowenRamos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a homeschooling family, I oppose this bill.

My children are not the government's children they are mine. Adding more strict laws goes against our rights.

No thank you.

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:02:43 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1634.

Gregory Misakian

HB-1634

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:59:30 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Whitney Blyth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a homeschool mother on Maui and an active volunteer in the community with youth, I strongly support this bill. This bill would protect the right of our homeschool keiki to participate in public high school sports and extracurricular activities. Excluding our homeschool keiki from these groups will do great harm to our homeschool keiki, our public school keiki, and our community. The rejection of this bill will actively harm the unity of our community and build division. It is right and fair that because homeschool families are required to pay school taxes, they also are allowed the right to choose to participate in activities to which our money goes.

Thank you for protecting our homeschool keiki and ohana's rights.

Sincerely,

Whitney Blyth