



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

Date: 02/19/2026
Time: 02:00 PM
Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Committee: EDN

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB1786, RELATING TO SCHOOL FACILITIES.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to make available all public school outdoor facilities and grounds on Saturdays and Sundays for public and community use without the need for any license, permit, or deposit of fees, under certain conditions. Requires reports to the Legislature. Repeals on 6/30/2030.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 1786.

This bill would require the Department to make public school outdoor facilities available to the public on Saturdays and Sundays, during hours determined by the Department, without fees or permits. This bill would also establish a "school facilities subaccount" for proceeds from leases, permits, and other revenue generated from the nonpermanent disposition of public school lands, pursuant to section 302A-1148.

With the generous support of the Legislature, the Department can provide quality educational facilities to support the educational program throughout the state. These facilities are planned, designed, constructed, and maintained to satisfy the educational program throughout the state. To preserve and sustain these facilities for their intended educational purpose while at the same time providing opportunities for occasional public use when not in use by the school, the Department established a Use of School Facilities program that is managed locally by school principals.

While the Department appreciates the Legislature's intent to offer recreational amenities to families across the state, there are several compelling reasons why the Department would strongly urge that all public use of school facilities remain under the strict authority of the school principal, with no deviations from its well-established Use of School Facilities policies and process.

Certain school facilities require special care and guidelines to ensure proper use. For example, school fields and football stadiums with artificial turf should never be allowed to have metal spikes or other damaging hardware driven into the ground as this would

not only damage the turf, padding and drainage system beneath the playing surface, but such actions would also void any product warranty which would normally apply and impact student athletes from using the field for a long duration as repairs would have to be funded to address the deficiencies to ensure it is safe and in adherence to the National Federation of High School standards for competition.

During non-school hours and when not in use for after-hours school activities, school parking lots and open playfields are often designated as emergency evacuation areas. During an active emergency, parking lots and open fields are sometimes needed by emergency responders for various reasons, such as emergency airlifts and staging areas for police and fire departments.

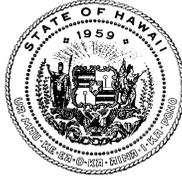
There are also significant health, safety, and security concerns with unmonitored use of school facilities. For many years, public school campuses throughout the state have been plagued with unmanaged public use of the school facilities after school hours, leaving campuses in conditions that are not conducive to learning. Examples of such situations include damaged plumbing and electrical fixtures, knives and other weapons or hazardous materials often left unattended on campuses, vandalism of buildings and other improvements, unauthorized harvesting from school gardens, and sanitation conditions that would be deemed a health risk to staff and students returning to instruction the next day. The unmanaged instances noted above pose a significant liability, risk, and additional costs to the state.

Under Section 4, the bill includes a requirement for the Department to submit a report to the legislature on the utilization of outdoor school facilities for two years. The reporting on utilization is to include estimates of weekend community use and observed types of use. To provide this type of monitoring would require additional resources and funding that the Department does not have.

Under the current Use of School Facilities program, school principals are delegated authority to coordinate and manage public use of any school facility under certain conditions that would not interrupt public education and activities after normal school hours. Examples of after-hours school activities that should be a priority over public use include school athletic activities and marching band practices on football fields, other extracurricular activities using open spaces throughout the campus, and school supply deliveries in parking lots. The application process for the program is available online and available to anyone wishing to request use on the weekend.

On a final note, operating facilities for unrestricted public recreational use across 258 schools statewide would require dedicated staff, supervision, maintenance funding, and liability management systems that the Department does not have. In essence, the Department would need to create a statewide public parks program. It would require changing how we develop and program facilities that were installed and are maintained for use by public school students during school hours. This would divert resources from the Department's primary mission of educating students.

Based on the comments offered in this testimony, the Department appreciates the committee's consideration of the comments offered in this testimony for HB 1786.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
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doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on H.B. 1786
RELATING TO SCHOOL FACILITIES**

REPRESENTATIVE JUSTIN H. WOODSON, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Hearing Date:
February 19, 2026

Room Number: Conference Room 309
via Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Department of Education
2 (DOE) for fiscal implications of implementation.

3 **Department Position:** The DOH provides comments on the public health implications of House
4 Bill 1786 (H.B. 1786), which requires the DOE to make available all public school outdoor
5 facilities and grounds on Saturdays and Sundays for public and community use without the
6 need for any license, permit, or deposit of fees, under certain conditions. Requires reports to
7 the Legislature.

8 **Department Testimony:** Opportunities for physical activity, exercise, and recreation are
9 essential for individual and community health, as regular physical activity and exercise help
10 prevent chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers.¹ Joint
11 use or shared use of public school facilities is an adaptable, cost-effective strategy that greatly
12 enhances access to physical activity opportunities, helps address chronic disease risk factors,
13 promotes health equity, and optimizes public resources.² In a Hawaii-based case study,

¹ Lee IM, Shiroma EJ, Lobelo F, Puska P, Blair SN, Katzmarzyk PT. Effect of physical inactivity on major non-communicable diseases worldwide: an analysis of burden of disease and life expectancy. *Lancet*. 2012;380(9838):219---229.

² National Shared Use Task Force. Collective Statement in Support of Shared Use. *Safe Routes to School National Partnership*; 2015.
www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Shared-Use-Task-Force-Collective-Statement.pdf.

1 increasing access to physical activity opportunities through joint use between an urban high
2 school and the Honolulu County Department of Parks and Recreation resulted in 84% of
3 participants agreeing that they had a safe place to exercise and 83% increased their physical
4 activity.³

5 The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) emphasize that access to safe and
6 convenient recreational facilities is a primary factor in health outcomes; however, many of our
7 residents live in "park deserts" where schools represent the only viable outdoor public space.
8 Hawaii's school facilities are often located within communities and neighborhoods, positioning
9 them as optimal and accessible spaces for play and exercise, especially for communities that
10 lack parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities. This is especially important for rural, low-
11 income, and minority communities, who are less likely to have access to recreational facilities.⁴

12 Joint use is an efficient and economical use of resources, maximizing and leveraging
13 existing infrastructure rather than investing in new facilities or offering none. By removing the
14 administrative and financial hurdles of licenses, permits, and deposits, which disproportionately
15 bar low-income and marginalized communities,⁵ this measure supports health for everyone
16 and leverages existing taxpayer-funded assets to overcome the sedentary lifestyle crisis and
17 improve the health of Hawaii's communities.

18 **Offered Amendments:** None.

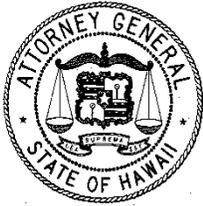
19 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

³ Maddock J, Choy LB, Nett B, McGurk MD, Tamashiro R. Increasing access to places for physical activity through a joint use agreement: a case study in urban Honolulu. *Prev Chronic Dis*. 2008 Jul;5(3): A91. Epub 2008 Jun 15. PMID: 18558041; PMCID: PMC2483555.

⁴ Young DR, Spengler JO, Frost N, Evenson KR, Vincent JM, Whitsel L. Promoting physical activity through the shared use of school recreational spaces: A policy statement from the American Heart Association. *Am J Public Health*. 2014;104(9):1583-1588. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2013.301461.

⁵ Public Health Law Center. *Eliminating Barriers for Community Recreational Use of School Property: Policy Guidance on Liability and Shared Use*. St. Paul, MN: Public Health Law Center; 2012. Accessed February 5, 2026.

<https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/phlc-fs-shareduse-samplestatute-language-2012.pdf>



**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. 1786, RELATING TO SCHOOL FACILITIES.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

DATE: Thursday, February 19, 2026 **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 309

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

Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

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

The bill: (1) requires the Department of Education (DOE) to make available all public school outdoor facilities and grounds on Saturdays and Sundays for public and community use without the need for any license, permit, or deposit of fees, under certain conditions; (2) requires reports to the Legislature; and (3) repeals this statewide pilot project on June 30, 2030.

Clarification of Terms

The Department suggests that a definitions section be added to section 302A-1148, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to provide clarity regarding the term "outdoor facilities and grounds." For example, does this term include, among other things, a parking lot, a playing field, an open-air covered dining facility, a swimming pool, or a stadium? If the Legislature does not intend to have all public school outdoor facilities and grounds open for use on weekends, then the Department suggests that specifying the types of outdoor facilities and grounds intended to be captured by new section 302A- (b), HRS, will provide clarity.

The bill requires that the DOE "make available all public school outdoor facilities and grounds on Saturdays and Sundays[.]" (Page 4, lines 1-2.) Because the term "public school" applies to DOE schools as well as public charter schools (see section

302A-101, HRS), if the intent of the Legislature is to have all outdoor facilities and grounds of public charter schools available, then new section 302A- (b) should be revised accordingly.

The Department also suggests clarification of the term, "make available" – specifically, does it only refer to physical accessibility, or does it impose any obligation on the DOE to ensure the safety or security of users during the weekend hours for each school's outdoor facilities and grounds? For example, does "make available" mean that the DOE must allow only for physical accessibility (e.g., if a school's open playing field is contained within a school's fenced perimeter, will the DOE only be required to unlock a gate for accessibility during hours specified)? If a school's stadium qualifies as an "outdoor facility," does "mak[ing it] available" mean that restroom facilities also need to be open on weekends when these outdoor facilities are available for use by the public and community? If a school's swimming pool qualifies as an "outdoor facility," does "mak[ing it] available" mean that restroom and shower facilities need to be open on weekends, or that a lifeguard be present during these open weekend hours?

Assumption of Risk

New section 302A-1148(b), HRS, provides that "all public school outdoor facilities and grounds [shall be made available on weekends] . . . for public and community use[.]" (Page 4, lines 1-4 (emphasis added).) New subsection (b) also requires the DOE to post appropriate signage at outdoor facilities and grounds stating that persons using the outdoor facilities and grounds pursuant to subsection (b) shall not hold the DOE and State responsible for any injury or death, and shall assume the risk of liability pursuant to section 302A-1148.5, HRS. (Page 4, lines 8-13.) Section 302A-1148.5, HRS, however, provides that – subject to certain limitations – any person entering "school grounds for the purpose of using the school's grounds, facilities, or equipment for recreational purposes . . . is deemed to assume the risk of liability for any injuries or death resulting from the use of the grounds, facilities, or equipment." (Emphasis added.) The assumption of risk provided in section 302A-1148.5, HRS, does not extend to using the school's grounds, facilities, or equipment for "public and community use," a term that is not defined anywhere in State law.

Chapter 302A, HRS, does not define "recreational purposes," but the term is defined in Hawaii's Recreational Use statute, sections 520-1 through 520-8, HRS. There, "'[r]ecreational purpose' includes but is not limited to any of the following, or any combination thereof: hunting, fishing, swimming, boating, camping, picnicking, hiking, pleasure driving, nature study, water skiing, winter sports, and viewing or enjoying historical, archaeological, scenic, or scientific sites." Section 520-2, HRS. To the extent the public may want to use a school's outdoor facilities for activities such as hosting a birthday party or allowing children to play on a school's playground equipment, these activities do not appear to fall within the definition of "recreational purposes."

To effectuate the Legislature's intent to limit the DOE's liability when public school outdoor facilities and grounds are utilized pursuant to new section 302A- (b), HRS (page 4, lines 1-13), the Department recommends inserting a new section in the bill to amend section 302A-1148.5, HRS, as follows:

Any person who enters school grounds for the purpose of using the school's grounds, facilities, or equipment for recreational purposes, **or for public and community use**, and who is not a student or member of the faculty or administration of that school, is deemed to assume the risk of liability for any injuries or death resulting from the use of the grounds, facilities, or equipment. This assumption of risk shall not apply if

Even with the assumption of risk, the Department is concerned that the DOE and State will nevertheless be exposed to substantial liability for injuries, or worse. To address this concern, the Department recommends amending section 302A-1148.5, HRS, as follows: (1) add "(a)" before the existing text of the section; and (2) add new subsection (b) as follows:

(b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize a private right of action, whether in law or in equity, against the State, the department of education, or any officer or employee of the department of education, whether in an official or individual capacity, relating to or arising out of section 302A-1148, and no court shall have subject matter jurisdiction to consider any claims relating to the same.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
ILIMA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
91-884 FORT WEAVER ROAD
EWA BEACH, HAWAII 96706

February 17, 2026

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

My name is Shayne Greenland, and I serve as the Principal of Ilima Intermediate School. I am writing to respectfully express my opposition to HB1786, which would require the Department of Education (DOE) to make all public school outdoor facilities and grounds available for public and community use on Saturdays and Sundays without the need for licenses, permits, or fees, under certain conditions.

While I strongly support community engagement and the shared use of public resources, HB1786 raises serious concerns from a school leadership, safety, and operational standpoint. School campuses are not simply open spaces; they are secured learning environments designed to protect students, staff, and school property. Mandating unrestricted weekend access without formal agreements (Use of Facilities Permit) or oversight removes essential safeguards that schools currently rely on to manage risk responsibly.

From a safety perspective, the absence of the Use of Facilities permits significantly limits accountability. Without a structured process, schools have no way to clearly identify users, establish expectations for behavior, ensure appropriate supervision, or address liability should injuries, property damage, or unsafe activities occur. Principals would remain responsible for the condition and safety of their campuses, yet HB1786 removes the very tools needed to manage that responsibility effectively.

Operationally, the bill places additional strain on schools that are already operating with limited custodial, administrative, and security resources. Weekend use of outdoor facilities often requires cleanup, repairs, and inspections to ensure that campuses are safe and ready for students and staff on Monday mornings. Eliminating fees or deposits removes a critical mechanism that helps offset these real and unavoidable costs, shifting the burden directly onto schools and the DOE.

It is also important to recognize that each school community is unique. What may be appropriate for one campus may not be appropriate for another due to location, surrounding neighborhood

conditions, facility design, or ongoing safety concerns. HB1786 removes local discretion and prevents principals and complex area leadership from making context-specific decisions that best serve both students and the surrounding community.

Community access to school facilities works best when it is intentional, structured, and collaborative. The existing Use of Facilities permitting processes allow schools to partner with community organizations while maintaining safety, accountability, and respect for school property. HB1786, as written, undermines that balance and creates unnecessary risk for schools, students, and the DOE.

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose HB1786 and urge you to reconsider advancing this measure. I strongly encourage continued dialogue with school administration to explore alternative approaches that promote community use while preserving safety, accountability, and local decision-making.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to Hawai'i's public schools.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shayne Greenland', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shayne Greenland
Principal
Ilima Intermediate School

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: February 18, 2026
TO: House Committee on Education
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB1786

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and esteemed Committee Members,

I am writing **in strong support of HB 1786**. Many families across Hawai'i struggle to find safe and accessible places for their children to play, especially on weekends. Our public parks are often crowded, and not every neighborhood has easy access to safe places where they can take their children to play. These spaces already exist and are publicly funded at our schools.

In the district I represent, kūpuna historically used the Hilo High School track as a walking path during the hours before and after school. Currently a locked gate prevents this usage. In Kaumana, there are no playgrounds or parks available to the nearby community. If they could access the Elementary School's playground during non-school hours this would greatly improve their recreational options.

By allowing community to use school grounds during non-school hours we can expand access without requiring the County or State to build new facilities which would save taxpayer dollars. Allowing families more options to gather, play, and connect within their own neighborhoods improves the overall quality of life and health for everyone.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenn Kagiwada', written over a white background.

Jenn Kagiwada



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

Thursday, February 19, 2026, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on HB1786 – RELATING TO SCHOOL FACILITIES

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

United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) provides **comments** on HB1786, which requires the Department of Education (“DOE”) to make available all public school outdoor facilities and grounds on Saturdays and Sundays for public and community use without the need for any license, permit, or deposit of fees, under certain conditions.

As the exclusive representative for most custodians employed by the DOE, UPW does have concerns with providing the public with unrestricted access to school playgrounds and outdoor areas during the non-instructional days of Saturday and Sunday. While we understand the intent of this measure, the current process was established to ensure that the operational capabilities of school personnel would be sufficient to meet the demand of public use on the weekend. Currently, unpermitted use of school grounds has resulted in growing incidents of excessive trash, vandalism, feces (both human and pet), and drug paraphernalia (used hypodermic needles), and we believe the provisions of this bill would lead to a significant increase in the number of incidents our members need to address every Monday morning to ensure a safe learning environment for students.

Each of our public schools is as unique as the communities they serve. UPW further believes that mandating all schools provide weekend access to outdoor facilities discounts the unique challenges each school faces in maintaining its campus. The current process allows each school to make decisions based on these challenges--ones that the public often does not consider or is unaware of. Simply put, our schools lack the resources and personnel to maintain and care for Hawaii’s schools as public parks.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HEADQUARTERS

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HAWAII

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Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4336
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1.866.454.4166

Toll Free - Molokai/Lanai only

To: **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION** Representative Justin H. Woodson, Representative Trish La Chica, Representative Terez Amato, Representative Luke A. Evslin, Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Representative Jeanne Kapela, Representative Darius K. Kila, Representative Ikaika Olds, Representative Christopher L. Muraoka, Representative Kanani Souza

DATE: Thursday, February 19, 2026

TIME: 2:00 PM

LOCATION: Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

Committee: EDN

BILL: HB 1786, Relating to School Facilities

TESTIFIER(S): Principals of Ka'ū-Kea'au-Pāhoa Complex Area

POSITION: OPPOSITION AND COMMENTS

We are writing in opposition to this bill requiring the Department of Education to make all public school outdoor facilities and grounds available for public use on weekends without the need for a license, permit, or deposit of fees.

While we deeply value the role our public schools play as community hubs, this proposal raises serious concerns regarding safety, accountability, fiscal impact, and operational sustainability for schools.

First and foremost, the bill does not clearly address who will be responsible for monitoring campus use during weekends. School campuses are not unsupervised public parks - they contain specialized equipment, secured areas, and infrastructure that require oversight. Without designated personnel to supervise usage, there is a significant risk of vandalism, unauthorized access to restricted areas, and misuse of school property.

This lack of supervision also raises critical safety concerns for students and staff when they return to campus following the weekend. Unmonitored weekend use increases the likelihood of hazards such as damaged equipment, broken glass, unsafe field conditions, unsecured gates, or unauthorized individuals leaving behind dangerous or inappropriate materials. Schools have a responsibility to ensure campuses are safe learning environments, and this bill creates conditions that could compromise that safety without providing resources to mitigate those risks.

Additionally, the issue of liability remains unclear. If a member of the public is injured while using school facilities, schools and the Department of Education could face substantial legal exposure. Current permitting processes exist in part to ensure that appropriate insurance coverage, safety expectations, and accountability measures are in place before community use occurs.

There are also significant fiscal and operational concerns related to maintenance. Increased unsupervised use would inevitably lead to accelerated wear and tear on fields, playgrounds, restrooms, and other facilities. Schools already operate with limited maintenance resources, and this bill does not identify funding or personnel to address the additional upkeep that would be required.

In particular, custodial costs present a major concern. Weekend community use would require additional custodial staffing for trash removal, restroom sanitation, field and facility cleanup, and damage assessment. Currently, permit fees help offset these costs. If fees are eliminated, it is unclear who will bear the financial burden of increased custodial hours, overtime pay, and ongoing maintenance needs. Without a dedicated

funding source, these expenses would likely divert already limited school operational funds away from student services.

Finally, the removal of permits and fees eliminates an important mechanism that helps schools manage scheduling, ensure responsible use, and maintain accountability. These processes exist not to restrict access, but to protect public property and ensure its sustainability for students and the community alike.

Public schools are committed to serving their communities, and many already make facilities available through structured processes that balance access with safety, stewardship, and fiscal responsibility. This bill, however, removes the safeguards that make such shared use viable.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to reconsider this measure or significantly amend it to address supervision, liability protections, custodial and maintenance funding, and clear accountability structures.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Jason Britt (Feb 18, 2026 12:11:42 HST)

Jason Britt
Principal, Na'alehu Elementary



Sharon Beck (Feb 18, 2026 12:09:47 HST)

Sharon Beck
Principal, Ka'ū High and Pahala Elementary School



Adria Medieros
Principal, Mountain View Elementary School



Brandon Tanabe (Feb 18, 2026 12:17:05 HST)

Brandon Tanabe
Principal, Kea'au Middle School



Andrew Scott (Feb 18, 2026 12:05:20 HST)

Andrew Scott
Principal, Kea'au Elementary School



Dean Cevallos
Principal, Kea'au High School



Kasey Eisenhour (Feb 18, 2026 12:13:30 HST)

Kasey Eisenhour
Principal, Keonepoko Elementary School



Karrin Hauanio
Principal, Pāhoa Elementary School

Kim Williamson

Kim Williamson
Principal, Pāhoa High and Intermediate School


Stacey Bello (F60 18, 2026 12:09:24 HST)

Stacey Bello
Complex Area Superintendent, Ka'ū Kea'au Pāhoa Complex Area



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 19, 2026

H.B. 1786 – RELATING TO SCHOOL FACILITIES

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO respectfully opposes H.B. 1786, which requires the Department of Education to make available all public school outdoor facilities and grounds on Saturdays and Sundays to the public and community use without the need for any license, permit, or deposit of fees, under certain conditions.

Ask any school employee, and they will tell you plainly: school grounds are not built to function as unsupervised public facilities. Opening campuses for unrestricted weekend access significantly increases safety, security, and liability risks. With school personnel entirely off duty on weekends—no administrators, no security staff, no custodians—there is simply no one responsible for monitoring who enters campus, what activities occur, or how damage is addressed. In the event of an emergency, vandalism, or hazardous behavior, the school has zero capacity to respond in real time. Many of our public school campuses lack full fencing and contain high-value equipment that becomes vulnerable the moment oversight is removed.

Even “outdoor only” access carries significant operational consequences. School administrators already return every Monday to deal with the aftermath of unpermitted weekend activity. They routinely encounter trash, abandoned charcoal from unauthorized barbecues, broken glass, graffiti, human feces, and drug paraphernalia—including used needles. These are not hypothetical concerns; they are recurring realities on many campuses. Under this measure, these problems would only increase, forcing school personnel to spend critical time every Monday inspecting grounds to ensure they are safe for students and staff—time taken away from actual instructional and leadership responsibilities.

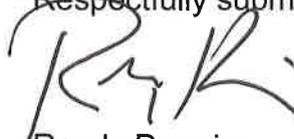
The Legislature has already acknowledged that public school facilities are aging and in need of repair, and yet this measure would place additional stress and deterioration on already fragile infrastructure. Larger and older campuses, in particular, would bear the brunt of this increased wear, without any mechanism to mitigate or manage the damage.

This measure also leaves schools fully responsible for the consequences: higher maintenance costs, increased demand for custodial and security services, and more frequent repairs caused by misuse or vandalism. These additional burdens would land squarely on an already strained DOE operating budget, with no offsetting revenue or staffing capacity.

Finally, many campuses are not idle on weekends. Athletics events, practices, extracurricular activities, fundraising events, contractor work, and longstanding community partnerships all rely on predictable, scheduled, and regulated use of school grounds. While this measure may be well-intended, and while schools are often viewed as the heart of their communities, it would introduce an entirely new set of challenges that schools are neither staffed nor resourced to absorb.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on H.B. 1786.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randy Perreira', written in a cursive style.

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

HB-1786

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:29:08 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/19/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, OPPOSE

1786 HB RELATING TO SCHOOL FACILITIES.

HB-1786

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:24:40 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/19/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dean I Hazama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Mililani Mauka/Launani Valley neighborhood Board 35 strongly supports HB1786 and its companion SB2605. Our schools are a part of our community and there are times when use of school facilities would benefit our community and its members. These facilities were built using taxpayer funds, so taxpayers should not have to pay for any fees to use them. In fact, many schools are located adjacent to City and County of Honolulu parks and other facilities which they use free of charge from the County. We urge this Committee to pass this bill.

HB-1786

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:09:11 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/19/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Winston R Welch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB1786.

Oftentimes, school grounds may be the only green space for the larger surrounding area in urban locations. This bill helps us to utilize our public assets in a way that does not degrade them or impinge upon their primary use for students during the week. I would offer a friendly amendment that grounds should be made available an hour after school finishes each day as well, with that time posted and subject to change as needs may change.

Thank you,

Winston Welch, Honolulu

Opposition Testimony to HB1786

My name is Wendy Kau and I am the proud Principal of Lunalilo Elementary School. I write to respectfully oppose HB1786. While I appreciate the Legislature's intent to increase equitable access to outdoor recreational spaces, this bill as written creates serious, unavoidable risks for school communities—risks to student safety, campus cleanliness, facility integrity, and the Department of Education's limited operational capacity. As the principal of an urban elementary school, I speak from direct experience managing these issues daily and ask the Committee to consider the real-world consequences of requiring unrestricted weekend access to public school outdoor facilities.

Summary of Key Concerns

- Supervision and Safety Vacuum: Weekends lack on-site school staff to monitor use or respond to emergencies. Opening campuses without permitting or required supervision removes any assurance of real-time oversight and increases liability exposure for the State and for children who use school grounds during school hours.
- Deterioration of Safety and Sanitation: Unsupervised access leads to repeated incidents of hazardous waste, biohazards, and property damage that staff must remediate before students return.
- Strain on Aging Infrastructure and Budgets: Many school sites are decades old and require managed maintenance. Uncontrolled public use accelerates wear-and-tear without compensatory funding.
- Erosion of Educational Focus: Mandated weekend access shifts staff time and school resources toward repeated clean-up and safety checks, diminishing instructional preparation and student support.
- Existing Processes Provide Accountability: A managed "Use of Facilities" process already allows community access with insurance, scheduling, and accountability—protections HB1786 would bypass.

Detailed Concerns and Evidence

1. Supervision and Safety Vacuum: On weekends, administrators, security personnel, and custodial staff are not on duty. Requiring campuses to be open to the public without permits, supervision, or any fee-based mechanism eliminates scheduled oversight. In the event of a medical emergency, violent incident, or whatever immediate safety concern arises, there is no guaranteed on-site responder. This lack of supervision is not hypothetical—it is operational reality. Schools cannot provide emergency response services on demand when staff are off duty; relying on community self-regulation is unsafe for children who rely on schools as controlled environments during the week.
2. Deterioration of Campus Safety and Hygiene: At many urban campuses, unauthorized weekend use already occurs. The consequences are substantial and recurring. School staff routinely encounter:
 - Hazardous waste: broken alcohol bottles, drug paraphernalia, discarded needles.

- Sanitation hazards: human feces, used condoms, soiled clothing, and other biohazards.
 - Property damage: broken playground equipment, vandalized signage, graffiti, and debris. Each Monday, custodial and teaching staff must prioritize cleaning and safe-up tasks before instructional time can begin. Those activities are time-consuming, costly, and emotionally taxing for staff. Removing permit requirements and fee structures effectively normalizes these risky behaviors and removes avenues for accountability and restoration.
3. **Strain on Aging Infrastructure and Limited Budgets:** Many school facilities in our system were constructed more than 50 years ago and are already underfunded for preventive maintenance. Increased, unsupervised weekend usage speeds deterioration—turf wear, fence and gate damage, court resurfacing needs, and greater restroom breakdowns—while our maintenance budgets and staff capacity remain fixed or declining. HB1786 does not provide dedicated funding, staffing, or maintenance resources to cover the foreseeable increase in repairs and consumable replacements that will follow expanded, unrestricted access. Passing this requirement without a funding mechanism shifts the fiscal burden from users to students and schools.
 4. **Impact on Educational Mission and Staff Time:** The intent of HB1786 may be community-minded, but the practical cost will be borne by educators and students. When custodial and administrative teams must spend significant Monday morning hours conducting hazard sweeps, disposing of hazardous materials, and making emergency repairs, teachers lose valuable planning and instructional time. School leaders must prioritize student safety over enrichment; adding a routine, avoidable clean-up burden undermines schools' core goals and diverts attention from instruction, student supports, and programs that directly benefit learners.
 5. **Existing Procedures Provide Responsible Access:** Current “Use of Facilities” processes ensure accountability: groups reserve space, maintain insurance, follow rules, and are responsible for cleanup and damage. These requirements protect students, reduce liability, and provide financial mechanisms (fees, deposits) to offset wear. Eliminating the permit and fee requirement removes incentives for responsible stewardship and allows free, unsupervised use that has already proven harmful at many campuses.

Conclusion Public parks and school campuses serve different, often complementary roles. A school campus must remain first and foremost a safe, clean, and predictable learning environment for students. HB1786's blanket requirement for unrestricted weekend access removes critical accountability measures, creates an enforcement and liability vacuum, accelerates deterioration of aging facilities, and compels school staff to expend time and resources addressing hazards instead of supporting instruction.

For these reasons, I urge you to hold HB1786 or amend it to include mandatory permitting, funding for additional staff and maintenance, opt-in participation, and clear safety and sanitation safeguards before any expansion of public use is required.

HB-1786

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 11:24:47 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/19/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Danny de Gracia II	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, I strongly support House Bill No. 1786 Relating to School Facilities.

This measure is important because it provides public spaces for children and their parents and caregivers to have places where they can play and get outdoor exercise. For many families, public spaces to engage in recreational sports and physical activity is not easily accessible, and school areas providing their spaces would make a difference for them. Physical activity and playtime is essential for childhood development and health in general, and the schools represent a known location and a familiar place they could play.

I understand that some may be hesitant because of the potential liability concerns that might be assumed by the state or the schools. Nevertheless, responsible adults such as parents or caregivers supervising their own keiki's activity can address this. It is important that we trust the community to govern themselves, and this is something that I believe is a minimal risk to public safety.

When I was growing up, I lived within walking distance of my elementary school and my family and friends would play in our public school's open areas in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Later, when I lived in San Antonio, Texas, we did the same and used the school's open areas to practice sports on our free time and even launched model rockets for the Air Force Junior ROTC rocket club. These were memorable activities at the familiar location of our school and we just did it because the school was available, no complex applications or permits needed. Trust and self-responsibility is a powerful thing in a society, and we should trust our parents and keiki to be able to play and exercise and have fun at their public school's open areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha Chair and Members of the House,

My name is Tim Hosoda and I am the Principal of Pauoa Elementary School. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony. I respectfully oppose HB1786.

While the purpose of this bill has good intentions, which is to give the public more access to courts, facilities, etc. The flip side is that schools have the burden of fixing all the damages done by the public.

While most citizens are responsible people, a small percentage of them cause a lot of issues for the schools to address. Since most public schools are not completely enclosed, we have a challenging time keeping people off our campuses during the weekends. Because of this, our play structure has graffiti all over it, there are empty food containers, cigarette butts, and drug paraphernalia, and dog feces all over our playgrounds. We have a window that was broken over a year ago that still has to be repaired.

The more people come on campus, there will be more wear and tear on our facilities, which are already old and aging. We want our facilities to be ready for learning each day, and this gets challenging when our custodians have to constantly clean up the mess from the weekends, students stepping in dog feces, and play structures looking very scary for elementary students because of the graffiti.

Instead of opening up the public schools on weekends, let's encourage the public to use the parks, beaches, and other open areas that won't impact students' learning.

Thank you,

Tim Hosoda

HB-1786

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 12:09:01 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/19/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Passantino	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong opposition to HB 1786.

Until this bill can unequivocally guarantee safety and shield schools from liability, I must stand firmly opposed.

Thank you for your consideration.