

STATE OF HAWAII

Executive Office on Early Learning

Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'āina
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

TO: Representative Jackson D. Sayama, Chair
Representative Mike Lee, Vice Chair
House Committee on Labor

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Testimony on H.B. No. 1825, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII TEACHER
STANDARDS BOARD.

Committee: LAB
Date: Tuesday, February 17, 2026
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Conference room 309

Executive Office on Early Learning's Position: **SUPPORT**

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) offers the following comments in support of H.B. 1825, H.D. 1, a bill to extend the length of time the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) can employ emergency hire permit holders from three to five years.

This measure aligns with the Early Learning Board's current framework of policy priorities, which are grounded in the Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan. Specifically, the bill advances State Plan Building Block 4: Early Childhood Workforce, by providing additional flexibility to HIDOE, EOEL, and the Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission (HSPCSC) to meet the staffing needs of the public PreK system.

Highly qualified EOEL and HSPCSC Public PreK teachers must have graduated from a State-Approved Teacher Education Program (SATEP) and hold a teaching license in Early Childhood Education, a unique set of qualifications for which there had been no significant demand prior to the expansion of the Public PreK program.

As the system adjusts to the increase in new early learning employment opportunities, some candidates encounter challenges obtaining an initial Early Childhood Education license due to the limited number of approved pathways and the timing of enrollment opportunities for existing programs. This is particularly challenging for educators who already hold a Bachelor's or Master's degree in early childhood education from a non-SATEP program.

This bill directly addresses current bottlenecks while maintaining the expectation that all educators move toward full licensure. By maintaining a defined, time-limited permit structure and accountability for licensure progress, the bill responds to workforce realities, but limits the use of Emergency Hire Permits to time-limited bridges to full licensure, not parallel or permanent hiring pathways.

We continue to work with the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board and higher education partners to ensure that these pathways are responsive, while reinforcing the shared goal of a fully licensed, well-prepared educator workforce.

We appreciate the Legislature's ongoing investment and shared commitment to strengthening Hawai'i's early learning system for our youngest keiki and their 'ohana. Thank you for the opportunity to share these comments in support of H.B. No. 1825, H.D. 1.



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

Date: 02/17/2026

Time: 09:00 AM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: LAB

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB1825, HD1, RELATING TO THE HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD.

Purpose of Bill: Permits the Department of Education and charter schools to hire unlicensed individuals as teachers on an emergency basis for five, rather than three, years. Requires the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board to adopt rules. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 1825 HD 1, which would update emergency hire policies to better reflect the realities of today's teacher workforce. Emergency hire teachers are often local community members who bring valuable subject-matter expertise, professional experience, and a strong commitment to Hawaii's students. While many are actively working toward full licensure, the current three-year limit can cut short their service before they are able to complete required coursework, exams, or other licensure steps - often due to factors outside their control. Extending or improving this pathway helps ensure classrooms remain staffed and students experience continuity in instruction.

Students benefit when educators are able to stay in classrooms long enough to build relationships, strengthen their practice, and contribute to school culture, especially in hard-to-staff schools and rural communities. HB 1825 maintains rigorous licensure standards while recognizing the structural barriers teachers face, such as testing availability, cost, and work-life constraints. By supporting steady, documented progress toward licensure, this bill protects instructional quality, improves retention, and ensures Hawaii's investment in recruiting and supporting educators results in stable, committed teachers for our students.

Upon further consideration of the initially proposed amendments, the Department respectfully recommends the following changes to Section 302A-804, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to strengthen implementation and provide flexibility:

1. By amending subsection (b) to read:

"(b) The department's powers and duties under this subpart shall be limited to:

(1) Hiring, except in emergency situations as described in this chapter, licensed teachers to teach in their fields of licensing;

(2) Reporting data annually to the board about the supply of, and demand for, teachers in department schools, including the identification of shortage areas, out-of-field teaching assignments, number of classrooms without a licensed teacher for a quarter or more, numbers of teachers teaching out-of-field, numbers and types of courses and classes taught by out-of-field teachers, and numbers and types of students taught by out-of-field teachers;

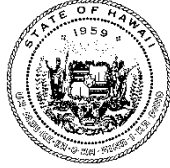
(3) On an emergency and case-by-case basis, hiring unlicensed individuals; provided that:

(A) A list of the names, work sites, teaching assignments, and progress toward licensing of these individuals shall be reported to the board and any changes shall be updated on a monthly basis by the department;

(B) There are no properly licensed teachers for the specific assignments for which the individuals are being hired; and

(C) No individual ~~may~~ shall be employed by the department on an emergency basis for more than ~~[three]~~ five years; provided that ~~the board shall adopt rules to facilitate emergency hiring pursuant to this paragraph; provided further that~~ in the case of a declaration of a state of emergency pursuant to section 127A-14, the board, pursuant to its powers in section 302A-803(a)(18), ~~may~~ shall extend the ~~[three-year]~~ five-year period by authorizing an extension to complete licensing requirements. During this time, the individual shall demonstrate active pursuit of licensing in each year of employment;

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1825 HD 1.



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD
650 IWILEI ROAD, SUITE 268
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

February 17, 2026

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

PERSON TESTIFYING: Mitzie Higa, Licensing Specialist, on behalf of the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB)

DATE: February 17, 2026

TIME: 9:00 am

LOCATION: Conference Room 309 and Video Conference

TITLE OF BILL: HB 1825 HD1 DOE; HTSB; Charter Schools; Emergency Hires; Rules

POSITION: Opposes HB 1825 HD1

Chair Sayama and Members of the House Committee on Labor:

The Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) respectfully **opposes HB1825HD1**, which would allow the Department of Education and public charter schools to employ unlicensed individuals as teachers on an emergency basis for **five years**, rather than the current **three years**, and requires HTSB to adopt related rules.

HTSB wants to point out that Emergency Hire Permit was created to be an exception not the norm. This is evident in the criteria set forth by statute. It was created for hard to fill areas and individuals were given three years to become licensed. The purpose of Chapter 302A is to have licensed qualified teachers teaching our public school children in Hawai'i. The three-year mark was to ensure that individuals would enter a State Approved Teacher Education Program (SATEP) as soon as possible while getting paid as a full time teacher. A SATEP does not take three years to complete and further if exigent circumstances beyond the control of the individuals prevents them from gaining licensure in three years, then the Hawai'i Administrative Rules allows for HTSB to suspend the rules and grant the individual a fourth Emergency Hire Permit.

This bill will only prolong the completion of a SATEP in a timely manner and cause students in the public school system to be without a qualified licensed teacher for five years instead of three years.

HTSB's position is grounded in our **Vision** of a highly esteemed public education system supported by rigorous professional teacher standards that foster student success, and our **Mission** to collaboratively set high licensing and credentialing standards that:

- Ensure every child in Hawai'i has a qualified teacher
- Promote professionalism and teaching excellence
- Build public confidence in the teaching profession
- Strengthen accountability to the public

Extending Emergency Hire Permits beyond three years directly conflicts with these commitments.

High-quality, equitable education depends on **well-prepared teachers** who are equipped to persevere and grow during their early years in the classroom. Research and experience show that teachers who enter through fast-track or alternative routes—particularly in urban districts—often begin underprepared and leave the profession at higher rates. Hawai'i's Emergency Hire Permit structure is designed to mitigate this by requiring individuals to pursue an **official teaching degree** within the three-year window.

To qualify for an Emergency Hire Permit, individuals must already hold a **bachelor's degree**. Completing a post-baccalaureate program or master's degree typically requires only one to two years—well within the existing three-year timeframe. Extending the permit to five years would allow individuals with any bachelor's degree, even in unrelated fields such as fashion design, to teach for an extended period without completing essential pedagogical preparation.

This is especially concerning because Emergency Hire teachers are frequently placed in **elementary and special education classrooms**, where strong foundations in literacy, numeracy, differentiated instruction, and support for multilingual learners are critical. In some cases, students have had Emergency Hire teachers every year of elementary school. As we continue to address learning loss from the COVID-19 years, further lowering preparation expectations would compound existing challenges.

Other states that have reduced their qualification standards are now experiencing negative consequences from those policy shifts. Hawai'i should not follow that path. Doing so would be a disservice not only to our keiki, but also to individuals who aspire to become fully licensed, highly qualified teachers.

While Hawai'i faces significant teacher shortages—ranging from 1,000 to 1,200 vacancies at the start of each school year—**lowering standards is not the solution. Instead, we should invest in strategies that strengthen the profession, including:**

- **Supporting teacher retention**
- **Expanding National Board Certified Teacher pathways**
- **Increasing mentoring and induction support, especially for those with Emergency Hire Permits**
- **Implementing a Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program with structured guidance and tuition support**

These approaches uphold quality while addressing workforce needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. For the reasons stated above, the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board respectfully **asks the Committee to oppose HB1825HD1.**



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Andrea Eshelman
Executive Director

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

Item: HB 1825, HD1 – Relating to the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board

Position: Support

Hearing: Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 9:00 am, Room 309

Submitter: Osa Tui, Jr., President - Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association **supports** H.B. 1825, HD1 to help address the state's persistent teacher shortage. By extending the employment limit for emergency hires from three to five years, this bill allows schools to retain dedicated educators who are already established in their classrooms but may need additional time to complete the licensing process.

This change provides much-needed stability for students and schools without compromising professional standards. Completing a licensure program—which often includes student teaching and rigorous exams—is incredibly difficult while managing a full-time classroom workload. Under the existing law, a teacher who is performing well but has not completed every requirement by the end of their third year will be let go.

Extending the timeline will allow the education system to capitalize on the valuable experience an emergency hire has gained. It also helps circumvent the difficulties associated with vacant positions and the use of long-term substitutes.

H.B. 1825, HD1 maintains important protections by ensuring unlicensed individuals are only hired when no licensed teacher is available. It also preserves transparency through regular reporting to the board regarding the progress of these hires and the status of teacher shortages across the state.

By focusing on actual progress toward licensure rather than an arbitrary deadline, we can support the growth of our workforce and keep committed professionals in our schools. We respectfully urge the committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo.



Testimony in Support of HB1825 / SB2616 and HB1840 / SB2125

Submitted by: The Teacher Lounge Team

Position: Support

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB1825 / SB2616 and HB1840 / SB2125.

Our organization works closely with schools and educators across Hawai'i, including J-1 teachers who are actively serving in classrooms while working toward full licensure. These educators play a critical role in maintaining instructional continuity, particularly in rural, neighbor island, and high-need schools where staffing challenges are most acute.

These teachers are fully committed to Hawai'i's students and are making documented progress toward licensure. However, the current licensure and permit timelines often do not reflect the practical barriers educators face. Required licensure exams involve multiple components that take significant time to prepare for, schedule, and complete successfully. The cumulative cost of exams and preparation materials can exceed \$1,000, creating a substantial financial burden.

Access challenges further complicate the process. On neighbor islands, limited in-person testing capacity can result in long delays that are outside a teacher's control. Virtual testing options are often not viable due to testing restrictions, technology limitations, or living situations that do not meet strict testing environment requirements.

When permit limits are rigidly applied without accounting for these realities, effective teachers may be forced to leave classrooms despite making steady progress toward licensure. This disrupts student learning, strains school communities, and can discourage educators from continuing to serve in Hawai'i.

While the J-1 teacher program allows educators to serve for up to five years, in practice the combined effects of licensure timelines, testing access, and permit limitations often reduce effective classroom service to no more than three years. This shortened window limits schools' ability to retain experienced teachers and undermines the stability that students and school communities need, as well as limits the cultural exchange and soft diplomacy impact of the J-1 teacher exchange program.

Students benefit most from stability—when teachers are able to remain in their classrooms long enough to build relationships, strengthen instructional practice, and support school culture. Policies that allow reasonable flexibility while maintaining licensure standards help ensure that schools can retain qualified, committed educators while safeguarding educational quality.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your support of HB1825 / SB2616 and HB1840 / SB2125. Mahalo for your consideration and for your continued commitment to Hawai'i's students and schools.

Respectfully submitted,
The Teacher Lounge Team



COMMITTEE ON LABOR
Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Chair
Rep. Mike Lee, Vice Chair

HEARING:
Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 9:00 AM
Conference Room 309 and VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
State Capitol

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT - HB 1825, HD1 RELATING TO THE HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD.

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Veronica Mendoza, Founding Executive Director of Roots Reborn and a founding coalition member of El Pueblo en Acción (EPA) Maui - *The People in Action Maui*. Roots Reborn **strongly supports HB 1825, HD1**, Relating to the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board, which permits the Department of Education and charter schools to hire unlicensed individuals as teachers on an emergency basis for five, rather than three, years, and requires the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board to adopt rules.

Roots Reborn is a grassroots, multicultural immigrant-justice and disaster-response organization serving migrant and immigrant communities on Maui and beyond. Born out of the August 2023 wildfires, we immediately stepped in to move aid, navigate systems alongside families, and build the trusted relationships that still anchor our work today. What began as wildfire response has grown into essential infrastructure for immigrant communities facing overlapping crises—from recovery and housing instability to shifting federal policies, increased enforcement, and rising fear.

In our work we have identified risks to our community presented by unnecessary barriers, such as the current limitations for emergency hires to complete teacher certification within three years. Nearly one in four Hawai'i residents over five years old speaks a language other than English at home. On Maui, our schools have not only multilingual students, newly arrived families, and households navigating school systems while also navigating language barriers and cultural transitions, but also a community still recovering from the wildfires, struggling with housing uncertainty, food insecurity, and the physical and mental health impacts of the disaster.

HB1825, HD1 is designed to address chronic staffing shortages and the instability they cause by extending the allowable period for emergency hires from three to five years. Forcing emergency hires out after three years creates unnecessary disruption for students and schools. House Bill 1825, HD1 can improve continuity, reduce turnover, and keep trusted educators in place while they complete licensure steps. We also support HB1825, HD1 because it broadens the pipeline of educators, including community members, multilingual educators, and internationally trained teachers, who may bring critical cultural and language knowledge into schools. For this reason, Roots Reborn respectfully requests that you vote **in support of HB 1840, HD1**.

Sinceramente,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Veronica Mendoza'.

Veronica Mendoza

Maui Roots Reborn, *Founding Executive Director*
El Pueblo en Accion Maui, *Founding Coalition Member*

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 7:37:24 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kehaulani Coleman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 8:45:05 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanani Kai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB1825 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). House Bill 1825 would amend §302A-804 HRS, the existing program for the hire of teachers without a teaching certificate when there are no licensed teachers available to fill vacant positions. Section 302A-804 presently allows an emergency hire to work for no more than three years before completing the process of certification. The amendment would extend that to five years while continuing to work toward certification. Hawaii has long had a shortage of teachers to fill the needs of public and charter schools. The existing emergency hire program has assisted schools in filling vacant teaching positions to the benefit of our students. These hires are required to work toward a teachers license while they are employed in the schools. There are times when a person has been taking steps toward obtaining a teaching license but have not completed the work in three years. Extending the time for completion will allow for better planning by administrators and strengthen ties to students and the community by uninterrupted instruction. I urge you to move HB1825 forward

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Kanani Kai

Member Indivisible Hawaii

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 9:33:10 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tim Huycke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1825.

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 9:58:35 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Wassell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB1825 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). House Bill 1825 would amend §302A-804 HRS, the existing program for the hire of teachers without a teaching certificate when there are no licensed teachers available to fill vacant positions. Section 302A-804 presently allows an emergency hire to work for no more than three years before completing the process of certification. The amendment would extend that to five years while continuing to work toward certification.

Hawaii has long had a shortage of teachers to fill the needs of public and charter schools. The existing emergency hire program has assisted schools in filling vacant teaching positions to the benefit of our students. These hires are required to work toward a teachers license while they are employed in the schools. There are times when a person has been taking steps toward obtaining a teaching license but have not completed the work in three years. Extending the time for completion will allow for better planning by administrators and strengthen ties to students and the community by uninterrupted instruction. I urge you to move HB1825 forward

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

JJ Wassell

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 10:04:27 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bo Breda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1825 DOE; HTSB; CHARTER SCHOOLS; EMERGENCY HIRES

I am writing in support of HB1825 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). House Bill 1825 would amend §302A-804 HRS, the existing program for the hire of teachers without a teaching certificate when there are no licensed teachers available to fill vacant positions. Section 302A-804 presently allows an emergency hire to work for no more than three years before completing the process of certification. The amendment would extend that to five years while continuing to work toward certification.

Hawaii has long had a shortage of teachers to fill the needs of public and charter schools. The existing emergency hire program has assisted schools in filling vacant teaching positions to the benefit of our students. These hires are required to work toward a teachers license while they are employed in the schools. There are times when a person has been taking steps toward obtaining a teaching license but have not completed the work in three years. Extending the time for completion will allow for better planning by administrators and strengthen ties to students and the community by uninterrupted instruction. I urge you to move HB1825 forward

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Bo Breda

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 10:05:31 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1825 DOE; HTSB; CHARTER SCHOOLS; EMERGENCY HIRES

I am writing in support of HB1825 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). House Bill 1825 would amend §302A-804 HRS, the existing program for the hire of teachers without a teaching certificate when there are no licensed teachers available to fill vacant positions. Section 302A-804 presently allows an emergency hire to work for no more than three years before completing the process of certification. The amendment would extend that to five years while continuing to work toward certification.

Hawaii has long had a shortage of teachers to fill the needs of public and charter schools. The existing emergency hire program has assisted schools in filling vacant teaching positions to the benefit of our students. These hires are required to work toward a teachers license while they are employed in the schools. There are times when a person has been taking steps toward obtaining a teaching license but have not completed the work in three years. Extending the time for completion will allow for better planning by administrators and strengthen ties to students and the community by uninterrupted instruction. I urge you to move HB1825 forward

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Peter Wilson

COMMITTEE ON LABOR
Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Chair
Rep. Mike Lee, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 9:30 AM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 309
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT - HB 1825, HD1 RELATING TO THE HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD.

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews, and I live in Wailuku, Maui. I submit this testimony to you today in support of HB 1825, HD1 Relating to the Hawaii Teachers Standards Board. I am an attorney licensed in Hawaii for over 25 years. Early in my career I worked on gender equity in STEM as a workforce development issue for many years. I focused on issues in recruitment and retention and wrote over ten peer-reviewed papers on best practices in the field.

One of the key workforce development areas I identified in my work with K-12 teachers and administrators and with professors and administrators of our institutions of higher education in Hawaii was the gaps in the education-to-workforce pipeline. This is an issue that we continue to see today when it comes to the education, recruitment and retention of teachers. Before attending law school, I attended the College of Education at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, concurrently with a subject matter Master's degree program, to obtain a professional degree in teaching. I actually completed the coursework and practicum for the professional degree in teaching, but, in order to get a teaching license, at the time, required a one-year, unpaid, teaching practicum with the Department of Education. I could not afford to work for free for a year, so I went to work in a different field which later led me to law school.

That someone like me, who worked full-time while pursuing both a subject-matter Master's degree and a professional degree in teaching should have switched course because of the barriers put in place to pursuing my desired career of teaching highlighted for me the education-to-workforce barriers between the College of Education at UHM and the Hawaii State Department of Education. While this bill does not address that particular barrier, and I would encourage the Committee to question the College and Department on that issue, it does address a corollary issue I also have personal knowledge of.

A friend of my daughter's is a fine young man with a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry from the University of California. He does not have a teaching degree, he has a subject-matter degree in chemistry. He wanted to explore teaching as a career, and applied as an emergency hire to teach science at Baldwin High School in Wailuku, Maui. In another sign of the dysfunction at the Department of Education, this young man was hired about one week before school started, although he had applied months prior. He had no classroom management experience, there were no curricular materials

provided, and yet, under the mentorship of the head of the Baldwin Science Department, he fully embraced his new job.

It was not without its bumps in the road, but I had the wonderful opportunity to witness him “find his calling.” He would come home from school almost every day and say, “I love my job!” He understood that, under the current law, he would need to get his teaching license within three years to keep this job that he loved. Unfortunately, because he was hired just before the school year started, it kind of interfered with his ability to register for teaching degree programs within the UH system. It is also hard to get a teaching degree within the UH system from a neighbor island. When the end of his first year teaching at Baldwin was complete, there was some difficulty for him in retaining his position, even though the head of the Science Department was leaving for another school, and there seemed that there would be no experienced science teachers there. Part of the barrier for him was that he was not yet enrolled in a teaching degree program, and the timing now for him to complete a UH-affiliated program would not work, so he enrolled in a more costly online teaching degree program out of state, rather than taking advantage of programs through the UH system he would have qualified for. This is how the current three-year limit for emergency hires can create a barrier for people who want to stay and teach as a profession in Hawaii.

It has been a great experience to witness someone who, like me, wants to pursue a teaching career here in Hawaii. We have chronic shortages of teachers, filled now with teachers on J-1 visas. It is important to have skilled, knowledgeable, professional teachers. I **request your support of HB1825, HD1** because it will allow people, especially neighbor islanders, with desirable subject-matter degrees a more appropriate amount of time to get their teaching degree so that they can remain in their schools, avoid them having to pay for expensive online programs instead of going through the UH system simply because of a shortage of time under the current law, and help build the pipeline of experienced teachers like my friend to provide an excellent education for our students.

Thank you for your time and for supporting teachers and students by supporting HB1825, HD1.

Mahalo nui,

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.
Wailuku, Maui

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 6:40:43 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
john savino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1825

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 6:49:40 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lily Troy MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1825

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:10:39 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rose Chismar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill.

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:16:31 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martha Nakajima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Thank you, Martha Nakajima, member of Indivisible

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 12:01:56 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gail Morrison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB1825 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). There are times when a person has been taking steps toward obtaining a teaching license but have not completed the work in three years. Extending the time for completion will allow for better planning by administrators and strengthen ties to students and the community by uninterrupted instruction. I urge you to move HB1825 forward

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Gail Morrison

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 12:08:14 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ron Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this sensible effort to address our critical shortage of classroom teachers. I thank you as an individual and as a member of Indivisible.

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 7:36:48 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Kealoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting testimony in support of this bill as a member of indivisible Hawai'i.
please hire teachers who aren't licensed as emergency if there are no licensed available.

mahalo for your consideration.

malia Kealoha

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:39:04 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Collins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1825 DOE; HTSB; CHARTER SCHOOLS; EMERGENCY HIRES

I am writing in support of HB1825 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). House Bill 1825 would amend §302A-804 HRS, the existing program for the hire of teachers without a teaching certificate when there are no licensed teachers available to fill vacant positions. Section 302A-804 presently allows an emergency hire to work for no more than three years before completing the process of certification. The amendment would extend that to five years while continuing to work toward certification.

Hawaii has long had a shortage of teachers to fill the needs of public and charter schools. The existing emergency hire program has helped schools fill vacant teaching positions, benefiting our students. These hires are required to work toward a teacher's license while they are employed in the schools. There are times when a person has been taking steps toward obtaining a teaching license but has not completed the work in three years. Extending the completion deadline will allow administrators to plan more effectively and strengthen ties to students and the community through uninterrupted instruction. I urge you to move HB1825 forward

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Susan Collins

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 4:53:50 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing HB1825 HD1.

Younghee Overly, a member of Indivisible Hawaii

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 6:34:56 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you -- I am a member of Indivisible Windward.

HB1825 DOE; HTSB; CHARTER SCHOOLS; EMERGENCY HIRES

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Hawaii has long had a shortage of teachers to fill the needs of public and charter schools. The existing emergency hire program has assisted schools in filling vacant teaching positions to the benefit of our students. These hires are required to work toward a teachers license while they are employed in the schools. There are times when a person has been taking steps toward obtaining a teaching license but have not completed the work in three years. Extending the time for completion will allow for better planning by administrators and strengthen ties to students and the community by uninterrupted instruction. I urge you to move HB1825 forward

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Stephen Munkelt
Kailua-Kona HI

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:13:33 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith Mura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Judith Mura, Support HB1825

February 16, 2026

Testimony in Support of HB1825 HD1, Relating to the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Anton Avanozian and I am an emergency hire teacher at HP Baldwin High School. I am writing in **strong support of HB1825 HD1**, which would extend the emergency hire permit for teachers from three to five years.

I am currently in my second year of teaching as an emergency hire. Like many of my colleagues, I am deeply passionate about education and am currently enrolled in a State Approved Teacher Education Program (SATEP) to earn my full licensure. However, I feel the immense pressure of the current three-year timeline.

The reality of being an emergency hire is that we are performing two full-time jobs: managing a classroom during the day and completing rigorous certification requirements at night. For many working professionals, three years is simply not enough time to navigate the financial, academic, and professional hurdles of licensure while also being an effective, full-time educator. The pressure of potentially being let go in my third year—despite my commitment to my students—is a constant source of anxiety.

I am aware that the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board has expressed concerns that this extension might "lower standards" or harm student outcomes. I respectfully disagree with this characterization for several reasons:

- This bill does not remove the requirement for licensure; it simply provides a realistic window for completion. Under this bill, emergency hires must still demonstrate "active pursuit" of licensing every year. This is not a free pass for five years, but rather a bridge to ensure we don't lose dedicated teachers mid-process.
- HTSB notes that we face over 1,000 vacancies annually. Forcing an effective teacher out after three years because they need one more semester of coursework does not protect students; it creates a vacancy that is often filled by a rotating door of substitutes. For a student, **having the same dedicated emergency-hire teacher for their four years is infinitely better than having three different teachers in a single school year.**
- Many of the 1,000 emergency hires currently serving in the HIDOE are subject-matter experts. We bring content knowledge and life experience that enriches our classrooms. Extending the permit allows us to refine our pedagogy without being forced out of the profession prematurely.

This year the DOE employed more than 300 international teachers on a J-1 visa, many of whom received a 5 year visa. If they are not able to obtain licensure within the current three year limit,

not only are they let go but they must be deported per visa requirements.

While I support high professional standards, we must acknowledge the current teacher shortage crisis. We cannot afford to lose passionate, knowledgeable educators who are already in our classrooms and working toward their credentials. HB1825 HD1 provides the flexibility needed to turn emergency hires into lifelong, licensed professionals.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering the perspective of those of us working every day in Hawai'i's classrooms. I strongly urge you to pass HB1825 HD1.

Sincerely,

Anton Avanozian
Science Teacher
Wailuku, HI

HB-1825-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:26:06 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jesse Hutchison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii has long had a shortage of teachers to fill the needs of public and charter schools. The existing emergency hire program has assisted schools in filling vacant teaching positions to the benefit of our students. These hires are required to work toward a teachers license while they are employed in the schools. There are times when a person has been taking steps toward obtaining a teaching license but have not completed the work in three years. Extending the time for completion will allow for better planning by administrators and strengthen ties to students and the community by uninterrupted instruction. I urge you to move HB1825 forward