



**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. 1888, H.D. 2, RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

DATE: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 325

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

Chair Tarnas 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) and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and to implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers; (2) elevates the penalty for harassment to a misdemeanor when the victim is an educational worker; (3) clarifies that the preparation of legal forms or documents for educational workers seeking temporary restraining orders (TRO) under new sections 302A- and 302D- , Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) does not constitute the unauthorized practice of law; and (4) appropriates funds for the DOE and the State Public Charter School Commission (Commission) to each establish one full-time equivalent advocate position to assist educational workers in obtaining a TRO.

1. Advocate Position

Sections 2 and 3 of the bill provide that the DOE's and Commission's "advocate" will assist educational workers in obtaining a TRO. (Page 4, lines 6-9; page 8, lines 1-4.) However, sections 5 and 6 of the bill appropriate funds for a "legal advocate position." To effectuate the bill's intent, the Department recommends deleting the word "legal" from the position of "legal advocate" on page 10, lines 7 and 17.

2. Definition of "Educational Worker"

New section 711-1106(3)(a), HRS, defines "educational worker" as "[a]ny administrator, specialist, counselor, teacher, or employee of the department of education or an employee of a charter school[.]" (Page 12, lines 18-20.) As written, this definition expressly includes administrators, specialists, counselors, and teachers employed by the DOE, but does not expressly include administrators, specialists, counselors, or teachers employed by public charter schools. Instead, it includes only "an employee of a charter school."

If the intent is to treat DOE and charter school personnel equivalently, the Department recommends amending new section 711-1106(3)(a) as follows:

Any administrator, specialist, counselor, teacher, or employee of the department of education or **[an employee]** of a **public** charter school;

(Suggested changes Ramseyered against the existing text and in bold.)

New section 711-1106(3)(c), HRS, also defines an educational worker as "[a] person hired by the [DOE] on a contractual basis and engaged in carrying out [DOE] or public charter school function." (Page 13, lines 5-8.) The DOE, however, would not typically hire a contractor to work at a charter school. The Department recommends a clarifying amendment to new section 711-1106(3)(c), as follows:

A person hired by the department of education **or by a public charter school** on a contractual basis and engaged in carrying out **a** department of education or public charter school function[.], **respectively.**

(Suggested changes Ramseyered against the existing text and in bold.)

3. Typographical Errors

The Department notes the following technical issues:

On page 8, line 1: Replace "subject" with "subjected".

On page 9, line 20, through page 10, line 1: Replace the phrase "legal form of document" with the phrase "legal form or document".

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



MAKALAPUA ALENCASTRE, ED. D.
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1100, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

FOR: HB 1888 HD2 RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS
DATE: February 24, 2026
TIME: 2:00 P.M.
COMMITTEE: Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
ROOM: Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
FROM: Ed H. Noh, Ed. D., Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 1888 HD2** which requires the Department of Education and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers.

The Commission appreciates the inclusion of public charter schools in this measure as charter schools are a part of the public education system. Providing safeguards and measures for educators who encounter instances of harassment is essential to creating a positive school environment.

The Commission is available to work with this committee, the DOE, and our public charter schools in moving this legislation forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



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

Date: 02/24/2026

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 325 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: JHA

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB1888, HD1, RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers. Elevates the penalty for harassment to a misdemeanor when the recipient is an educational worker. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD2)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the underlying goals of HB 1888, HD 2, which provides additional protections to the Department's employees, but has some requested revisions.

Based upon newly received information from the Department of the Attorney General, the sections of the bill addressing an advocate are no longer necessary. It is our understanding that the Department of the Attorney General is currently developing a pilot program in which it will assist state agencies with Temporary Restraining Orders (TRO) and that the pilot will identify private attorneys available to assist state employees with TROs and reimburse state agencies for these services.

To ensure the effective continuation and successful accomplishment of the Department's academic mission, the Department recommends reinserting in Section 7(1)(g), "Disrupts or interferes with the administration or functions of any school, school administration office, or school board."

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to HB 1888, HD 2.



S E A C
Special Education Advisory Council
1010 Richards Street Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-8126 Fax: (808) 586-8129
email: spin@doh.hawaii.gov

February 24, 2026

**Special Education
Advisory Council**

Ms. Martha Guinan, *Chair*
Ms. Susan Wood, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Dominique Anders
Ms. Kathie Awaya
Ms. Virginia Beringer
Mr. Will Carlson
Ms. Annette Cooper
Mr. Mark Disher
Ms. Nancy Gorman
Dr. Natalie Haggerty
Ms. Stacy Haitzuka
Ms. Mai Hall
Ms. Melissa Johnson
Ms. Tina King
Ms. Dale Matsuura
Ms. Cheryl Matthews
Ms. Jessica McCullum
Ms. Siena Molina
Ms. Trish Moniz
Ms. Cherine Pai
Mr. Chris Pelayo
Ms. Kiele Pennington
Ms. Kau'i Rezentos
Ms. Rosie Rowe
Dr. Scott Shimabukuro
Mr. Herbert Taitingfong
Mr. Steven Vannatta
Ms. Lisa Vegas
Ms. Jasmine Williams

Ms. Helen Kaniho, *liaison to
the Superintendent*
Ms. Wendy Nakasone-Kalani,
*liaison to the military
community*

Amanda Kaahanui, Staff
Susan Rocco, Staff

Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 1888, HD 2 - RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF
EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

Dear Chair Tarnas and Members of the Committee:

The Special Education Advisory Council, Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **supports the intent** of HB 1888, HD 2 to require the Department of Education and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers. However, we have **serious concerns** about creating a new offense of "harassment of an educational worker" and raising penalties to a misdemeanor, as they may adversely affect parents of children who are receiving special education and related services under IDEA. Our concerns are outlined below:

Existing harassment law provides a better vehicle for addressing harassment to educational workers. Current Hawaii statutes already address harassment, assault, and threats. The existing harassment statute, HRS §711-1106, has clear definitions and ample case law to provide protection to victims of harassment while at the same time preserving the rights of citizens to engage in political expression.

The proposed classification of harassment of an educational worker law as a misdemeanor would impose significantly harsher penalties than the existing harassment law. In Hawaii, misdemeanors are punishable by up to 364 days in jail and a fine of up to \$2,000. Current harassment law, by contrast, is classified as a petty misdemeanor, punishable by up to 30 days in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000. Even if a parent is ultimately cleared of the charge of committing harassment of an educational worker, he or she would have been significantly harmed financially and emotionally by being arrested, having to find legal counsel and child care for their children, etc.



SEAC is concerned that HB 1888, HD 2 will negatively impact parent/school partnerships and potentially harm students with disabilities. Many parents of children with disabilities, including a number of our SEAC members, are worried due to language in the harassment statute that is subject to interpretation such as the non-violent action of "repeatedly making telephone calls, facsimile transmissions, or any form of electronic communication *without purpose of legitimate communication.*" They fear they could be punished with a serious fine or jail time by exercising their legal right to advocate on behalf of their child with a disability. It has long been documented throughout the nation that special education parents in particular fear retaliation and may refrain from advocating for the individualized services and supports that their child needs to succeed.

Published data other than anecdotal reports has not been provided to the public to justify raising the penalties against parents who are seen as harassing. SEAC is in support of the requirements of this proposed legislation to have the Department of Education collect and share data on incidences of harassment. We believe reliable data is needed to prior to amending existing law. In the interim, we believe schools should focus on improving de-escalation training, mental health support, and restorative practices rather than expanding punitive measures that may harm the very families we aim to support.

For all the reasons stated above, SEAC urges your committee to seriously consider the negative impact that sections of this bill may have on families of students with disabilities. Hasty legislation without a foundation of well-analyzed data and clear definitions does not ensure either protection or justice.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns.

Respectfully,
Martha Guinan
Martha Guinan
Chair



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026**

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair
Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on HB1888, HD2 – RELATING TO EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties.

UPW **strongly supports** HB1888, HD2, which requires the Department of Education (“DOE”) and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers. This measure also elevates the penalty for harassment to a misdemeanor when the recipient is an educational worker.

We strongly believe that educational workers should feel assured that the DOE and public charter schools are committed to taking effective action against harassment in order to protect the rights and dignity of the hard-working public employees who are tasked with maintaining a positive learning environment for Hawaii’s students.

Given recent events and the apparent rise in incidents of harassment targeting educational workers, it seems evident, unfortunately, that legislation like this is necessary.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

HEADQUARTERS

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Osa Tui, Jr.
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Logan Okita
Vice President

Cheney Kaku
Secretary-Treasurer

Andrea Eshelman
Executive Director

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Item: HB 1888, HD2 – Relating to the Safety of Educational Workers

Position: Support

Hearing: Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 2:00 pm, Room 325

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

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association believes that educational workers play a critical role in keeping our schools safe and supportive for children. When educators and staff face harassment or threats without clear protections or consistent response procedures, it affects not only employees but also students and school communities. As such, we ask that you **support H.B. 1888, HD2**.

The HSTA has been speaking on this topic for many years and applauds the efforts this session to examine how we can protect our teachers and staff at schools around the state. We appreciate the advocates who have worked on HB 1888's bill language for many years and find it important to mention that this piece of legislation creates clarity and accountability when harassment occurs and requires the Department of Education to act.

Since the pandemic, we've seen attacks on educational workers rise. According to a July 2024 article in Education Week, "57% of teachers now report that they are considering quitting or transferring specifically due to concerns about school climate and safety." Additionally, a Business Insider article from August 2025 shared that "26% of teachers reported experiencing physical violence from parents since the return to in-person school."

A school that is unsafe for a teacher or educational worker is, by definition, an unstable environment for a student. Protecting the worker is a prerequisite for protecting the learner. The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to support H.B. 1888, HD2.

Mahalo

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 1:36:54 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julianne King	Hawaii Autism Foundation	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

House of Representatives

State of Hawaii

HB 1888 HD2

Aloha Chair and committee members,

I strongly oppose HB1888. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

I am a mamabear. My son who has autism has now finished school but we have always been very involved with advocating for his education since he was 3 years old. I have prided myself in being a good and fair team member while advocating during an iep or team meeting or just in discussions with his teachers or the many wonderful people who have worked with my son over the years.

But I have experienced difficult years and moments when either a teacher has dropped the ball or an educational worker has not done their job in protecting my son and had put him at risk.

The worst incident was when he was 14 and he was molested in the men's changing room at the Kailua rec center pool. Months before that happened, he had told me he was afraid of the man in the bathroom. I immediately alerted the team and we had a meeting and decided he would only go into single stall rest rooms. Sadly, the skills trainer did not follow the rules and let him back into the public changing rooms. Beau let us know he was molested that day. I was so shocked, scared and beside myself with grief but we forgave the woman. But months later I found out she had also stopped taking data and we had an argument about that in the hallway at school. It

wasn't a loud argument but I let her know that wasn't ok and she stormed off and quit the team. If HB1888 passes, that scenario could have been much different. I could have been charged with a misdemeanor, had to have gone to court and either pay a fine or go to jail for up to a year.

Do you realize what would happen to my son if I wasn't there for him? Or what could happen to countless children whose mamabears like me advocate for their children but someone who works with them whether a teacher, rbt or aid isn't a team player who treats people with respect and honesty decides to press charges?

Please do not pass this bill.

Aloha

Julianne King

President Hawaii Autism Foundation



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Kāneʻohe Elementary School
45-495 Kamehameha Highway
Kaneohe, HI 96744
Phone 808-305-0000 • Fax 808-235-9185

Date: 02/24/2026

Time: 2:00 PM

Location: 325

Committee: JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Department: Education
Person Testifying: Derek Minakami, NBCT, Principal of Kāneʻohe Elementary School
Title of Bill: HB1888 RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.

Position: SUPPORT

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Mahina Poepoe, and Members of the Committee

As a school principal, the safety of students and staff is my highest priority. When students feel safe, they are able to fully engage in learning and not be distracted by threats or fears. Likewise, when teachers feel safe, they are able to devote all of their attention to teaching and caring for their students and not unintentionally pass on anxiousness to their classes.

Sadly, today, teachers, administrators, educational assistants, and other educational workers face harassment, intimidation, and threats to their safety without any deterrent powerful enough to shelter them from harm. The assault suffered by Moanalua High School Associate Athletic Director Natalie Iwamoto highlights the elevated risk and real, lasting suffering we face. Regrettably, many other dedicated and effective educators endure repeated harassment outside of the headlines. They languish in our classrooms/schools/workplaces. Feeling exposed and without recourse, too many have left the profession, leaving behind the students, schools and system they once nurtured.

This bill provides accountability for those that threaten the safety of educational workers and puts into place protections for those being targeted. Further, it reinforces that schools, a haven for our most vulnerable populations, should be kept safe and free of harassment.

Mahalo for your consideration of this request.



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 Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 24, 2026

H.B. 1888, H.D. 2 — RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the intent of H.B. 1888, H.D. 2, which requires the Department of Education and public charter schools to take certain steps to report incidents of harassment and implement procedures for handling harassment of educational workers.

For several years now, the HGEA has expressed concern to the DOE about the escalation of violence against employees. We have demanded that both the DOE and Attorney General do more to protect and support employees instead of seeking first to avoid liability. Earlier this school year, a school administrator was brutally assaulted at an Oahu public high school. After the assault, we demanded in a letter to the Superintendent to know what steps the DOE intends to take to prevent such instances from occurring again in the future.

We support the intent of this bill as it also seeks to achieve what we have been demanding from the DOE. Educational workers should feel assured that their employer is committed to taking prompt and effective action against harassing conduct and those who engage in harassing behavior should be held accountable.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1888, H.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



February 23, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT** of **HB1888 HD2**, Relating to the Safety of Educational Workers

To: Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

From: Llasmin Chaine, LSW, Executive Director, Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **HB1888 HD2**, Relating to the Safety of Educational Workers

Hearing: Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325, State Capitol

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women is committed to advancing the safety and health of girls and women. The Commission **supports HB1888 HD2** because it **addresses the persistent issue of harassment against educational workers, which disproportionately impacts women and can contribute to hostile work environments that undermine safety and wellbeing.**

By requiring the Department of Education and public charter schools to establish clear procedures for reporting and addressing harassment, this **bill takes meaningful steps toward ensuring** that educational workers have access to **safe and supportive workplaces**. The inclusion of disruption or interference with school functions in the definition of harassment recognizes the broad range of behaviors that can create unsafe conditions, and the elevation of penalties for harassment against educational workers reflects the seriousness of these offenses. These measures align with best practices for workplace safety and affirm the State's commitment to protecting those who serve in our schools.

The Commission respectfully recommends that the Department of Education and public charter schools engage in regular consultation with stakeholders, including frontline educational workers, to ensure that policies are responsive to real-world conditions. Clear communication and transparency in procedures will be essential to the bill's success. We appreciate the Legislature's attention to this critical issue and urge continued efforts to promote safe workplaces.

The Commission appreciates the Legislature's commitment to community safety and **urges passage of HB1888 HD2**. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:27:48 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naomi Grossman	HIP SEAC	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

My name is Naomi Grossman, and I am against HB 1888. I represent HIP SEAC organization and the following is a quick review of my statements:

First of all, we are a group of parents (Hawaii Parents HIP) registered in the State of Hawaii on July 6, 2011. It is an information and advocacy network of families, professionals and paraprofessionals who are committed to protecting the educational rights of children and their families in the State of Hawaii. HIP SEAC is committed to facillitating the authentic voice on behalf of students eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

As parents we will not threaten with bodily harm or injury although we may criticize and express ourselves freely.

If you plan to enact this bill, the possibility of including parents of children with disabilities it will vioate/cost the rights of our children and that's going to cost the state a good deal of money.

Thank you for your attention reviewing my testimony.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 2:42:10 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Elento	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

Aloha,

I **OPPOSE** HB1888 HD2.

Refer to the testimony in opposition to HB1888 HD1 provided by the Special Education Advisory Council and individual, Kalma Wong, Ph.D.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in opposition to HB1888 HD2.**

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 6:58:28 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 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 1888 HB RELATING TO THE SAFETY OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS.

TO INCLUDE SCHOOLS: DOE, CHARTER, EARLY EDUCATION (PRIVATE, MILITARY, STATE) AND PROTECTION OF ALL WORKERS ON THOSE CAMPUSES!

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 10:47:12 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB1888, which takes essential steps to protect educational workers from harassment and provides clear procedures for reporting and response. Our teachers, administrators, and school staff shape Hawai‘i's future every day. They deserve to do so in safety and without fear.

The Problem

Educational workers increasingly face harassment from students, parents, and community members—behavior that disrupts schools, demoralizes staff, and drives experienced educators from the profession. While existing law addresses discrimination and harassment against students, protections for workers facing harassment specifically because of their role as educational workers remain insufficient.

When workers fear harassment, they leave. Hawai‘i already faces educator shortages that harm student outcomes. Clear procedures, robust investigation, and meaningful penalties signal that we value the people who educate our children. Workers should not have to accept harassment as part of the job.

HB1888 is reasonable, targeted, and overdue. I urge its passage.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 1:24:06 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taren Taguchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

Educational workers play a critical role in keeping our schools safe for children. When educators and staff face harassment or threats without clear protections or consistent response procedures, it affects not only employees but also students and school communities.

HB1888 is important because it creates clarity and accountability when harassment occurs. By establishing clear expectations for investigation, documentation, and response, the bill helps ensure that concerns are taken seriously and addressed consistently rather than handled informally or in isolation. This structure helps prevent situations from escalating and promotes safer, more stable school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the mental health and well-being of educational workers. When educators are fearful or burned out due to unresolved safety concerns, they cannot fully thrive in their roles. When educational workers are unable to thrive, neither will our students.

When the Department of Education is accountable for responding to and documenting harassment, schools are better equipped to support their staff and maintain a secure learning environment for students.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888 to help ensure safer schools for both educational workers and the children they serve.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 11:17:11 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donna Brzezowski	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a parent of children receiving special education services through the Department of Education I oppose Bill HD1888. We as parents need to advocate for our children that do not have voices to speak, or those that have verbal, cognitive, intellectual challenges. Please consider the challenges that families with disabled individuals encounter and all we want for children is to receive the services they are entitled to by the DOE.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 11:54:12 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Dieperink	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1888 HD2

However, I would **recommend omitting "annoy, or alarm any other person"** from the following sentence: "A person commits the offense of harassment if, with the intent to harass, annoy, or alarm any other person, that person:"

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 1:25:18 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teresa O	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB 1888HD 2

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 2:11:25 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Abellanida	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

I strongly OPPOSE HB1888HD 2

I am concerned that HB1888HD 2 is written specifically to eliminate the advocacy rights of special ed parents by trying to deter them from advocating at all. Given the long and hostile history of the Felix Consent decree that led to federal oversight of the DOE for 12 years for its failure to provide Jennifer Felix with special education in the 1990's, this decree drew the battle lines between parents and the DOE at that time. Although the decree ended in 2005, this bill seems to be another attempt to scare parents from advocating for their disabled child, this time by proposing a full misdemeanor charge and or jail time in this bill.

The definition of Harassment in section 711-1106 (1) (c), and (f) in HD1888HD2, related to sending emails, faxes, and making phone calls repeatedly without legitimate purposes of communication or using some sort of offensive language to an educational worker or intending to cause bodily injury or damage is already language in Act 245 from 1996 and Act 90 from 2009, which makes this bill duplicative.

Further, "repeated communication" between parents and educational workers is essential in providing the special education student FAPE. Denying communication and allowing the educational worker the authority to advise the parent that "further communication is unwelcome" as per 711-1106 (1) (e), seems to contradict the purpose of having an IEP team and violates the principles of IDEA.

Lastly, the true purpose of this bill seems to be the DOE's desire to elevate the current harassment law already in HRS from a petty misdemeanor, punishable by up to 30 days in jail and \$1000 fine to a higher full misdemeanor punishable up to 364 days in jail and up to a \$2000 fine is clearly meant to at best to strip parents of their rights to advocate for their child and their right to a Free Appropriate Public Education, at worst to deter all sped parents from any advocacy. And an unintended consequence to a sped family would be complete devastation by the purposes of this bill despite the only parental motivation being to help their child. Is this not a clear abuse of power, another Felix II?

For all these reasons, I OPPOSE HB1888HD2. Children with disabilities are the MOST vulnerable individuals in our society. They need to be helped through life, not punished. Do not make their lives more difficult without clearly evaluating the consequences of this bill that includes language that has been continually deferred over several years. Past legislative committees recognized the errors of this bill and hopefully, so will this committee.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 6:38:37 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TERI SAVAIINAEA	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully oppose HB1888 HD2.

Hawai'i already has harassment laws in place. Those laws should be enforced fairly and consistently. Elevating the penalty to a misdemeanor solely because the recipient is an educational worker creates unequal treatment under the law.

No specific profession should receive heightened criminal protection over others. Nurses, doctors, police officers, and many public servants face challenging interactions, yet we do not create separate criminal classifications for each group.

This bill introduces subjectivity in enforcement and risks deterring parents from advocating for their children within the DOE and charter school systems.

Please enforce existing laws rather than create unequal penalties.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote NO on HB1888 HD2.

Mahalo,

Teri Kia Savaiinaea

Wai'anae resident

February 22, 2026

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1888. The current draft of this bill is the result of several years of work by numerous Department of Education employees (and former employees) who have faced threats and harassment as a direct result of their work. They have been ringing the alarm about escalating safety threats and the need for specific requirements that protect educational workers. As we have all recently seen, their concerns were justified because there is shocking video footage of a physical attack against someone who was just doing her job.

In the past, the Department of Education refused to step in to help employees who were being threatened and harassed. Instead, the Department took the position that it was not allowed to commit its resources to help its employees secure Temporary Restraining Orders or pursue other actions required to protect themselves. As a result, talented educators left the profession, moved away, or found work in the private sector. The Department – and the students it serves – lost out on experienced and dedicated employees who wanted to make a difference.

HB1888 can fix this problem by making it clear the Legislature values the people who work for the State and expects the Department of Education to provide support to employees who are being threatened and harassed simply because they are doing their jobs. In addition, HB1888 ensures all employees are treated fairly because it establishes clear requirements for the Department. Those requirements do more than just protect the employees. They also ensure the Department's response is satisfactory and does not lead to potential claims against the State.

In a perfect world, HB1888 would not be necessary. Just like any other employer, the Department has legal and moral obligations to ensure its employees work in a safe environment that is free from threats, harassment, and violence. Unfortunately, history shows us that legislative action is necessary. Years have already passed without the Department being able to implement processes and procedures to protect educational workers who are being threatened and harassed. Much of that delay appears to be the result of confusion about whether the Department can provide supports to its employees. HB1888 eliminates any questions about whether the Department must protect its employees, and provides a clear framework for what actions are necessary. It is an important piece of protection for the thousands of individuals who are working to support the children of our State.

Mahalo,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'C. A.' followed by a long horizontal flourish.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 7:15:38 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vera Marie Asato	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm oppose to this bill because I feel its to harsh on the parents to speak up for the rights of their child. Who else would protect them. I'm a parent of a 34 year old young adult. I've been in the position parent are in now. I filed due process 3x while my child was in DOE. Over the years while my child was in the system until now. I see no progress in TEAM WORK. Which I was continuesly told we are. This bill will only put parents in fear to help their child succeed in their right to a fair education. What's the successful rate of children when they leave the system? To me I'm guessing very low. My child had limited help in preparing him for a life after DOE. I was the back bone on moving him forward. Their was no one from DOE telling me Mrs. Asato here is our plan to help your child after he leave us. Ater all these years you would thinking DOE learn from their mistakes and make it better. It seems that its getting worse. If they have to now fine or jail parents. Well, their goes TEAM WORK. Parents shouldn't be angry with the system if only they make it right. Thats what LEGESLATION needs to look into. Fix the system instead of letting it fall at the expense of our children.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 7:57:42 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leigh Wong-Miyasato	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose making harassment a full misdemeanor. The Office of the Public Defender has stated that placing one group of people above others "has no impact on public safety and has no measurable deterrent effect." This may be used to deter parents from advocating for their children.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 8:03:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vernon Asato	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a parenr of a Special Needs son I strongly oppose Bill 1888. If this Bill passes it would really handcuff parents or guardians advocating for the child. Knowing they could be possibly fined or worst case scenario face jailtime this would put them at a great disadvantage in these IEP Meetings. What happened to the Right of Free Speech? If this bill passes I dread to imagine where it will end. Will this authority given to Teachers, Coaches or the Police. This would make the system like what China, Russia and North Korea implement on a lower scale. STOP BILL 1888!!!

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 9:32:15 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kamakani de dely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill because I feel that it infringes on the rights of parents being able to speak their voice. This is a terrible bill.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 9:33:01 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mallory De Dely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill because I feel that it infringes on the rights of parents being able to speak their voice. This is a terrible bill.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 9:33:39 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Dedely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill because I feel that it infringes on the rights of parents being able to speak their voice. This is a terrible bill.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 9:50:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Blaine De Ramos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB1888.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 9:54:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alec Wong-Miyasato	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly **OPPOSE** the amendments made to HB1888.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 10:00:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kera Wong-Miyasato	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB 1888 HD2. Parents should never feel afraid to advocate for their child in a school setting. This is especially true for parents of children with special needs, who must often speak up to ensure their child receives appropriate support and services. Protecting a parent's right to advocate is critical to safeguarding the well-being and education of our keiki.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 10:08:33 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
michelle andrews	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I respectfully oppose HB1888, which seeks to expand statutory definitions of harassment relating to educational workers, create new reporting procedures, and elevate harassment offenses to misdemeanors.

While supporting the safety and well-being of teachers and staff is important, this bill in its current form raises significant concerns:

1. Overbroad and Vague Definitions

The bill’s language broadly includes “disruption or interference with the administration or functions” of schools and school boards as harassment. This phrasing can be too vague and prone to subjective interpretation, criminalizing ordinary community engagement, parental advocacy, or peaceful protest at school board meetings. Vague statutes risk chilling speech and civic participation, especially where educators, parents, and community members must engage in robust discussion about public education.

2. Creates an Uneven Legal Standard

Elevating harassment to a misdemeanor solely because the recipient is an educational worker could create an uneven system of protections between education employees and other public service workers (e.g., first responders, social workers) without clear justification. Laws that single out classes of employees risk inconsistency in application and enforcement.

3. Risk of Misuse and Unintended Consequences

Because the bill expands the definition of harassment to include interference with school administration functions without clearly defined limits, it could be misused to penalize parents or community members who exercise free expression or raise legitimate concerns. Even well-intended stakeholders could fear legal consequences for attending meetings, engaging with administrators, or advocating for change.

4. Burdens on School Resources

Implementing new reporting procedures and handling an expanded scope of misdemeanor cases may strain already limited resources within the Department of Education and public charter

schools. Without additional clarity or funding earmarked specifically for due process and fair adjudication, the bill may inadvertently shift administrative capacity away from educational priorities.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to withhold support, request substantive revisions, or defer HB1888

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 10:14:02 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kamuela Soo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 10:34:27 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kalma Wong	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 24, 2026

Re: HB1888 HD2

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I strongly **OPPOSE** HB1888 HD2. The passage of this bill will unnecessarily elevate harassment from a petty misdemeanor to a full misdemeanor when the complainant is an “educational worker.” This will create a special class of people that puts the bill’s definition of “educational worker” above all others in the state. This bill will also place harassment (when the recipient is an “educational worker”) in the same classification as other misdemeanors, such as third-degree negligent homicide, fourth-degree sexual assault, fourth-degree arson, and assault in the third degree.

According to the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §711-1106, “a person commits the offense of harassment if, with intent to harass, annoy, or alarm any other person, that person...repeatedly makes telephone calls, facsimile transmissions, or any form of electronic communication...including electronic mail transmissions, without purpose of legitimate communication...”

Who is to make the determination of whether or not the purpose of the communication was legitimate? Parents of children with special needs must communicate with the school and staff regularly and oftentimes must make repeated phone calls and emails in order to ensure that their children receive an appropriate education. The subjective nature of this statute will put parents at risk of being arrested for advocating for their children and perhaps be subjected to \$2000 in fines and a year in jail. Essentially, a parent may be threatened with a year in jail for annoying an “educational worker” with excessive emails.

The result of this threat will be the suppression of advocacy by parents of special needs children and will quash legitimate complaints and will, in the end, harm not only special needs children, but all schoolchildren.

I must also add that the suggestion to amend the Hawaii Revised Statutes in this way has been attempted several times before. House Bill 2125 in 2022, House Bill 1651 in 2024, and House

Bill 1895 in 2026 (this very session) all tried to elevate harassment from a petty misdemeanor to a full misdemeanor when the recipient is an “educational worker.” All three bills were deferred. In fact, HB1895 was deferred three weeks ago and the language regarding HRS §711-1106 was inserted into this bill (HB1888). It appears that there will be continued attempts to revise the HRS in this way no matter how many times the bills are deferred, or how many people oppose the bills, or how many people point out the unconstitutionality of the bills.

Please OPPOSE HB1888 HD2.

Sincerely,

Kalma K. Wong, Ph.D.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 11:09:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara Taitano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

Educational workers play a critical role in keeping our schools safe for children. When educators and staff face harassment or threats without clear protections or consistent response procedures, it affects not only employees but also students and school communities.

HB1888 is important because it creates clarity and accountability when harassment occurs. By establishing clear expectations for investigation, documentation, and response, the bill helps ensure that concerns are taken seriously and addressed consistently rather than handled informally or in isolation. This structure helps prevent situations from escalating and promotes safer, more stable school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the mental health and well-being of educational workers. When educators are fearful or burned out due to unresolved safety concerns, they cannot fully thrive in their roles. When educational workers are unable to thrive, neither will our students.

When the Department of Education is accountable for responding to and documenting harassment, schools are better equipped to support their staff and maintain a secure learning environment for students.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888 to help ensure safer schools for both educational workers and the children they serve.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 11:24:48 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inger Stonehill	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

Every day, educational workers walk into our schools carrying the responsibility of keeping our children safe, supported, and ready to learn. They de-escalate conflicts, notice when something is wrong, and create the stability students rely on. They are the steady presence our children need.

But when those same educators face harassment or threats and are met with silence or inconsistent responses, they are left feeling exposed and alone.

No one who dedicates their life to children should feel unprotected at work. Harassment cannot be minimized or quietly set aside. When it is handled inconsistently or without documentation, trust erodes and harm continues. The message it sends is painful: your safety is negotiable.

The emotional toll is real. Fear, anxiety, and burnout take hold. Passion fades. And when educators feel unsafe, students feel it too. Safe adults create safe schools.

HB1888 brings clarity and accountability. By requiring the Department of Education to respond to and document harassment, it ensures that concerns are taken seriously and action follows. It replaces uncertainty with structure and silence with responsibility.

Passing HB1888 is not just a policy decision. It is a statement of values. It tells educational workers that their safety is not optional. Their well-being is not secondary. Their voices are not inconvenient.

I respectfully urge you to support HB1888. When we protect the adults who protect our children, we strengthen every school community.
Inger Stonehill

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 12:09:52 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vernelle Oku	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill that violates the 1st Amendment and subjugates parents rights under educator's rights.

it should not be criminal to voice your concerns to the person who is paid by your tax dollars.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 6:25:38 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine H. Payne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 23, 2026

Testimony on HB 1888

Relating to the safety of educational workers

Aloha Chair Tarnas and Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the House Committee on the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

I am Catherine H. Payne, a retired Department of Education teacher and administrator.

My testimony is in support of HB 1888.

I am thankful that this important measure is being heard by your committee. The issue of threats and verbal and physical harassment of public school education workers has been long-standing and not appropriately addressed across the system. Good-faith efforts have been made to assist individuals and schools facing challenges, but clear legal expectations and consequences have not been established.

In recent years the escalation of verbal threats has been more common behind the anonymity of social media. Even when the perpetrator is identifiable it has been difficult to do anything until the threats have been acted upon. The toll this has taken on the climate of the schools and on the individuals subjected to the harassment has been significant. People leave the profession or are discouraged from even considering a career in teaching if they are not protected from threats and abuse.

This is an opportunity to make progress on this important matter. You will send a message to educators that they are worthy of support.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:16:28 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Oka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

Educational workers play a critical role in keeping our schools safe for children. When educators and staff face harassment or threats without clear protections or consistent response procedures, it affects not only employees but also students and school communities.

HB1888 is important because it creates clarity and accountability when harassment occurs. By establishing clear expectations for investigation, documentation, and response, the bill helps ensure that concerns are taken seriously and addressed consistently rather than handled informally or in isolation. This structure helps prevent situations from escalating and promotes safer, more stable school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the mental health and well-being of educational workers. When educators are fearful or burned out due to unresolved safety concerns, they cannot fully thrive in their roles. When educational workers are unable to thrive, neither will our students.

When the Department of Education is accountable for responding to and documenting harassment, schools are better equipped to support their staff and maintain a secure learning environment for students.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888 to help ensure safer schools for both educational workers and the children they serve.

Sincerely,

Andrea Oka

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:23:47 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Uemura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

Educational workers play a critical role in keeping our schools safe for children. When educators and staff face harassment or threats without clear protections or consistent response procedures, it affects not only employees but also students and school communities. These threats can also carry over into our communities as the individuals become more emboldened as they are not stopped.

HB1888 is important because it creates clarity and accountability when harassment occurs. By establishing clear expectations for investigation, documentation, and response, the bill helps ensure that concerns are taken seriously and addressed consistently rather than handled informally or in isolation. This structure helps prevent situations from escalating and promotes safer, more stable school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the mental health and well-being of educational workers. When educators are fearful or burned out due to unresolved safety concerns, they cannot fully thrive in their roles. When educational workers are unable to thrive, neither will our students. As a former educator responsible for the safety of my students, and as the mother and daughter of teachers, their safety was always on the top of my mind. The toll that this can take on the health and welfare of staff then can manifest itself into the classroom and outside. With social media, this can become even worse.

When the Department of Education is accountable for responding to and documenting harassment, schools are better equipped to support their staff and maintain a secure learning environment for students.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888 to help ensure safer schools for both educational workers and the children they serve.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:12:38 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marie Inouye	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chairperson , Vice Chairperson PoePoe, and Members of the committee

Date: 02/23/2026

Subject: Support for HB1888

To Chairperson Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and members of the committee,

I am a District Resource Teacher that supports our public schools in high end and due process cases. In my role I have seen many cases that involve angry and irate parents. I write today expressing my concern for the safety of my colleagues.

To children, a teacher wears so many hats, they are mental health counselors, social workers, and in some cases, a parental figure. It is in a teacher's DNA to want to help children become better in all aspects of life. It's why we get into this profession. Because of their active role in children's lives, teachers are the frontline when it comes to dealing with parents, guardians and other people involved in a child's life and sometimes these interactions become heated. A child's well being is at the forefront, which always causes heightened emotion.

HB1888 supports our educators and helps them fulfill their role as teachers both professionally and emotionally. It will support teachers in advocating what they believe is right for their students and their student's education. This is what a teacher's job is. When teachers are threatened personally or their families are threatened, this directly affects their mental health and their ability to do their job, therefore ultimately impacting the student and their education.

In a world that is seeing increasing violence in educational institutions, the safety of our educators should be first and foremost. Teachers would not be in these situations if not for their job, where they should receive support in addressing

these situations. It should be the Department of Education that supports them in documentation and response, as their employer.

I respectfully ask for your support of this bill to help ensure the safety of our educators and our keiki. Thank you!

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:51:07 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krislyn Hashimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Krislyn Hashimoto, and I write in strong support of HB1888 as an ally to educators and school staff.

While I am not an educational worker myself, I have close friends and family members who are. I have seen how harassment, threats, and a lack of institutional support take a real toll, not just professionally, but personally. When educators feel unsafe or unsupported at work, that stress follows them home and affects their well-being and their families.

HB1888 is important because it creates clarity and accountability when harassment occurs. By establishing clear expectations for investigation, documentation, and response, the bill ensures concerns are taken seriously and handled consistently. Educational workers should not be left to navigate these situations alone.

When educators feel safe and supported, they can fully show up for our keiki. If we expect them to care for our children every day, we must also ensure they are protected in their workplace.

I respectfully urge you to support HB1888 and help strengthen safety and accountability in our schools.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Krislyn Hashimoto

**Testimony in Support of HB1888
Relating to the Safety of Educational Workers
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
February 24, 2025 | 2:00 p.m.**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

I submit this testimony in strong support of HB1888.

At a recent House Committee on Education hearing, the Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE) stated it is now working on internal protocols to address harassment of employees by members of the public. I appreciate that movement. However, those protocols are not yet implemented, and for years prior the Department maintained that harassment by community members was a "personal matter" and that protecting employees could be an unconstitutional use of public funds.

Since 2012, Department of Human Resources Development policy 800.002 has prohibited workplace violence, including threats, intimidation, and disruptive conduct by outside individuals who pose a risk in the work environment. Despite that longstanding policy, when I filed a grievance after experiencing severe and pervasive harassment connected to my job, I was told that tolerating this conduct was part of my duties. In a September 20, 2021 letter, Supervising Attorney General James Halvorson wrote that my perpetrator's "nasty and vulgar attacks" were "a part of the duties of HIDOE employees involved with his children's education." This was nine months after a court issued a three-year injunction against harassment.

That disconnect is why this bill is necessary.

For years, DOE employees have asked for a consistent response process when they face harassment and threats tied to their work. Meaningful progress has come only after sustained pressure from victims. Even the Code of Conduct was not developed proactively by the Department. It was created only after a prior version of this bill crossed over to the Senate Committee on Education.

A defined process protects employees and reduces the State's exposure to liability by ensuring due diligence and consistency. Even if the Department is now developing protocols, codifying minimum requirements ensures follow-through and accountability.

Educational workers should not have to endure harassment, threats and assault as a condition of employment. HB1888 establishes a reasonable framework to ensure there is a structured response when employees are targeted because of their work.

Mahalo for your time and for continuing to stand with educational workers on this issue.

Sincerely,
Lindsay Chambers

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 12:51:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ivana Crumpton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

Educational workers are on the front lines of keeping our schools safe. They show up every day to protect, teach, and support our children. But when they face harassment or threats without clear protections or consistent responses, they are left vulnerable—and so are our students.

HB1888 matters because it brings clarity and accountability where it is urgently needed. Harassment cannot be brushed aside, handled quietly, or left to individual schools to manage alone. This bill sets clear expectations for investigation, documentation, and action. It ensures that when someone speaks up, they are heard—and that something is done.

The emotional toll of unresolved harassment is real. It leads to fear, burnout, and deep frustration. Educators who feel unsafe or unsupported cannot fully give their energy, focus, and care to students. And when the adults in a school are struggling, the entire school community feels it.

By requiring the Department of Education to respond to and document harassment, HB1888 creates meaningful accountability. It sends a clear message that the safety and dignity of educational workers matter—and that safe adults create safe schools.

I respectfully urge you to support HB1888 to protect the people who dedicate their lives to protecting our children.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 1:04:47 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ross Isokane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. As a casual, outside observer (I, personally, have no kids in school and am also not in the education field), I've been observing a negative trend in the news of overbearing parents (who are crossing a clear line from being acceptably protective of their child to being unacceptably aggressive and psychologically/physiologically abusive to another adult/human being). In this same vein, I'm observing a lack of protection/support for our teachers in response to this heightened threat from their employer (i.e., the State). I'm not tracking this, but my hunch would be that there's complaint data from teachers that will verify this increasingly negative trend.

For the opponents of this bill, all these imagined fears of a hypothetical that results in infringing on the parents' rights to participate in their child's education seems way overblown. If this bill is adopted, I have little expectations that education workers and judges will start abusing the provisions to trample on reasonable parents' rights. If a teacher brings a frivolous complaint of harassment against an innocent parent, the parent will have all their legal rights under due process laws. But what protections are we providing to our education workers who are the victims of this? An employer has a duty to protect their employees who are at risk in performing their job.

My only concern would be hypothetical education workers who try to game the system by filing frivolous claims and then taking unlimited paid leaves of absences. But that feels pretty remote and we can always track/monitor if it becomes widespread and adjust as we go to put up reasonable guardrails in the future.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 3:52:50 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Ng	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

As a former teacher, and a current homeschooling parent, I oppose this.

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 5:10:45 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
NOELLE TAVARES-SUMIYE	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

Educational workers play a critical role in keeping our schools safe for children. When educators and staff face harassment or threats without clear protection or consistent response procedures, it affects not only employees but also students and school communities.

HB1888 is important because it creates clarity and accountability when harassment occurs. By establishing clear expectations for investigation, documentation, and response, the bill helps ensure that concerns are taken seriously and addressed consistently rather than handled informally or in isolation. This structure helps prevent situations from escalating and promotes safer, more stable school environments.

The lack of meaningful support when harassment occurs also takes a serious toll on the mental health and well-being of educational workers. When educators are fearful or burned out due to unresolved safety concerns, they cannot fully thrive in their roles. When educational workers are unable to thrive, neither will our students.

When the Department of Education is accountable for responding to and documenting harassment, schools are better equipped to support their staff and maintain a secure learning environment for students.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1888 to help ensure safer schools for both educational workers and the children they serve.

Sincerely,

Noelle Tavares-Sumiye

HB-1888-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:25:17 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vanessa Ott	Individual	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Mahina and Members of the Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Committee,

I wish the legislative website had a fourth option for POSITION INPUT, "Support with amendments." That's my position on HB1888.

Harassment of educational workers is problem that involves the Board of Education, public schools, public charter schools, the unions, police, judiciary, attorney general, and the public. One bill cannot fix all the problems.

As it stands today, this bill is over-reaching, convoluted, and tries to do too much. HB1888 should be simplified so it focuses solely on what we are going to do to help educational workers who become victims of harassment while performing their job duties.

While I admire the goal of ensuring a secure environment for educators and students, addressing the many problems why our public schools are not safe, secure, and happy places is a much bigger can of worms.

HB1888 looks like the legislature's attempt to micromanage the many problems our public schools because the department's conflict resolution and complaint procedures are so dreadfully awful. This fundamental problem deserves much more study and understanding.

What makes sense to do NOW, while we seek a cure to the underlying cultural dis-ease in our education system, is to pass a law that immediately provides safety, a law that:

- (1) makes any Chapter 711 offense against an educational worker who is performing the one's job duties a misdemeanor;
- (2) requires the worker's site supervisor to attempt to mediate the conflict before a worker decides whether or not to pursue an TRO;

(3) requires the Board of Education and Department of the Attorney General to create training materials, fillable forms, and all materials necessary to assist educational workers in understanding HRS Chapter 711, and with filing TROs if they so desire;

(4) requires all training materials for education employees with regard to conflict resolution and offenses against the public order be posted on a publicly-available web pages;

(4) requires the police to investigate complaints of HRS Chapter 711 violations against the public order (not education employees);

(5) requires the employer to reimburse the educational worker, *if* an educational worker prevails in obtaining a TRO in connection with incidents related to one's job duties, for: (a) the costs related to filing a TRO including copying and filing court documents, court fees, (b) travel costs to attend court, and (3) lost wages for each day a worker must appear in court.

(6) provides funding for an audit over the next few years to examine all the costs associated with Chapter 711 offenses against educational workers including, but not limited to employees' time, reimbursement costs, police investigative time, the court's time, etc., and report back to the legislature for three years.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Vanessa Ott