



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

**Date:** 03/03/2026

**Time:** 02:00 PM

**Location:** 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** FIN

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB1893, HD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

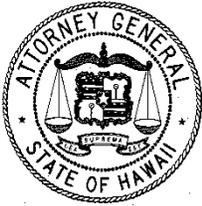
**Purpose of Bill:** Clarifies that public charter school teachers are eligible for incentives under the Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program. Increases the bonus per year for each public school teacher and public charter school teacher who maintains current national board certification from \$5,000 to \$10,000. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 1893, HD 1, to recognize and provide financial incentives for teachers in Hawaii who achieve and maintain National Board Certification. National Board Certification is widely regarded as a mark of accomplished teaching practice and contributes to teacher leadership and professional growth.

Public charter school teachers are employees of their respective charter schools rather than the Department. For successful implementation, public charter schools must be responsible for verifying eligibility, providing funding, and processing the incentive for eligible teachers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1893, HD 1.



**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA  
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

H.B. NO. 1893, H.D. 1, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

**BEFORE THE:**

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 3, 2026

**TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 308

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

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Chair Todd and Members of the Committee:

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

The bill clarifies that public charter school teachers are eligible for incentives under the Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program (Incentive Program) and increases the bonus per year for each public school teacher and public charter school teacher who maintains current national board certification from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

The Incentive Program is set forth in section 302A-706, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), and is established within the Department of Education (DOE). See section 302A-706(a), HRS. The bill amends section 302A-706, HRS, to expressly provide that charter school teachers are eligible for the Incentive Program. However, the DOE is not the employer of charter school teachers. Charter school teachers are employed by their respective public charter schools.

To effectuate the bill's apparent intent and to avoid implementation ambiguity, the Department recommends the following revisions:

1. Remove the phrase, ", including public charter school teachers," from the amendment to section 302A-706(a), HRS, on page 1, lines 6-7.
2. Remove the phrase, ", including each public charter school teacher," from the amendment to section 302A-706(a)(1), HRS, on page 1, lines 12-13.

3. Remove the phrase, ", including each public charter school teacher," from the amendment to section 302A-706(a)(4), HRS, on page 2, lines 5-6.
4. Insert a new section in the bill to add a new section to chapter 302D, HRS, that mirrors section 302A-706, HRS, but replaces "department" with references to public charter schools, and replaces "public school teacher" with "charter school teacher." This would establish a teacher national board certification incentive program for charter school teachers. The new section should also mirror the increased bonus per year for each charter school teacher who maintains current national board certification that is provided in section 1 of the bill (page 1, line 11). The suggested new section would read as follows: (the bold font, other than the title, indicates differences from the wording in section 302A-706, HRS).

SECTION . Chapter 302D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

**"§302D- Teacher national board certification incentive program.** (a) There is established, pursuant to this section, the teacher national board certification incentive program to recognize and support exemplary teaching practice by supporting **charter school teachers** who have achieved national board certification under the certification program of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The teacher national board certification incentive program shall provide:

- (1) A **\$10,000** bonus per year for each **charter school teacher** who maintains current national board certification;
- (2) \$1,500 upon completing all components of the certification program of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards;
- (3) A reimbursement of the remainder of the national board certification application fee upon achievement of national board certification; and
- (4) An additional \$5,000 bonus per year for each **charter school teacher** who maintains current national board certification and who teaches at:
  - (A) A school in **a focus, priority, or other similar designation**, as determined by the **employing public charter school**;
  - (B) A school with a high turnover rate, as determined by the **employing public charter school**; or
  - (C) A hard-to-fill school, as determined by the **employing public charter school**.

(b) The incentive program shall include a mentoring component that encourages and enables national board-certified teachers to assist other teachers and share their teaching expertise."

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

**JOSH GREEN, M. D.**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR  
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



**J.N. MUSTO, PhD**  
CHIEF NEGOTIATOR  
KE PO'O KUKAKUKA

**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII**  
**OFFICE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**  
**KE KE'ENA MĀLAMA LIMAHAHA AUPUNI**  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**  
**KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA**  
235 S. BERETANIA STREET, SUITE 1201  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

Statement of  
**J.N. Musto, PhD**  
Chief Negotiator, Office of Collective Bargaining

Before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**  
Tuesday, March 3, 2026  
2:00PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of  
**HB1893 HD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION**

**(WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY)**

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and the members of the committee:

The Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB) appreciates the intent of HB1893 HD1, which increases the bonus for teachers who achieve and maintain a current national board certification from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and clarifies the eligibility of public charter school teachers for the bonus. However, we must respectfully oppose this measure specifically to the increase of the teacher incentive bonus amount.

Wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment are subject to negotiations as provided in Hawaii Revised Statutes, §89-9.

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

**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

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FOR: HB 1893, HD1 Relating to Education  
DATE: March 3, 2026  
TIME: 2:00 P.M.  
COMMITTEE: Committee on Finance  
ROOM: Conference Room 308 & Videoconference  
FROM: Ed H. Noh, Ed. D., Executive Director  
State Public Charter School Commission

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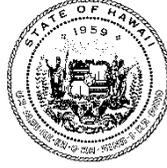
Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission ("Commission") appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 1893 HD1** which clarifies that public charter school teachers are eligible for the incentives provided under the Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program.

The Commission appreciates the efforts of the House to clearly articulate the availability of this incentive for public charter school teachers. However, this has been a deterrent in the past due to unallocated funds for this incentive. Some charter schools have honored this incentive via per pupil funds, which was not the intended use. The Commission humbly requests the committee consider amending this measure by providing a clear and separate appropriation to charter schools for the payment of this important annual incentive through the Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program.

The Commission is available to assist the House and this committee in contacting the public charter schools to determine the amount needed to fund this incentive.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



**STATE OF HAWAII**

**HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD**

650 IWILEI ROAD, SUITE 268

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

March 3, 2026

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

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

**DATE:** March 3, 2026

**TIME:** 2:00 pm

**LOCATION:** Conference Room 308 and Video Conference

**TITLE OF BILL** HB1893HD1 Department of Education; Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program; Public Charter Schools; Teachers

**POSITION:** Supports HB1893 HD1

**Chair Todd and Members of the House Committee on Finance:**

**The Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) strongly supports HB1893 HD1**, relating to education, which clarifies that public charter school teachers are eligible for incentives under the Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program.

**HTSB fully supports our National Board Certified Teachers and affirms that charter schools should receive the same dedicated funding for NBCT bonuses that the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) currently receives for NBCTs in district public schools. Just as HIDOE should not be required to use per-pupil funds to cover these bonuses, neither should our public charter schools. Ensuring equitable access to NBCT incentive funds strengthens the teaching profession across all public education systems in Hawai'i.**

Incentivizing national board certification is especially important given Hawai'i's high cost of living and the significant challenges we face in teacher recruitment and retention. Each year, our public schools—including charter schools—begin the school year with **1,000 to 1,200** qualified teacher vacancies. Retaining highly effective teachers is essential, and NBCTs are among the most impactful educators in the nation. Research consistently shows that National Board Certified Teachers improve student learning outcomes and contribute to stronger school communities.

Providing this NBCT bonus to our public charter schools as we do our HIDOE schools, will help retain these exceptional educators and encourage more teachers to pursue the rigorous national board certification process. Retaining highly qualified teachers reduces the need for ongoing recruitment and creates a stable, experienced workforce. These educators also serve as mentors and leaders—an especially valuable asset as Hawai'i works to establish a Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program to strengthen teacher preparation and support.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure. For the reasons stated above, the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board respectfully **asks for your support on this bill.**



1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 • Fax: (808) 839-7106 • Web: www.hsta.org

**Osa Tui, Jr.**  
President

**Logan Okita**  
Vice President

**Cheney Kaku**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Andrea Eshelman**  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**Item: HB 1893, HD1 – Relating to Education**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing: Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 2:00 pm, Room 308**

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

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) **strongly supports** H.B. 1893, HD1, which clarifies the eligibility of public charter school teachers for the National Board Certification incentive program and increases the annual bonus for all certified teachers from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

National Board Certification is widely recognized as the most respected professional credential in K-12 education. It requires a rigorous process of self-reflection and assessment that significantly improves teaching practice and student outcomes.

By doubling the annual incentive, this bill acknowledges the immense dedication required to achieve and maintain this elite certification. It provides a meaningful financial reward that helps our most accomplished educators offset Hawai'i's high cost of living.

This increase is also a critical retention tool. Incentivizing board certification encourages our best teachers to stay in the classroom here in Hawai'i rather than seeking opportunities elsewhere.

We also strongly support the clarification that our public charter school educators are fully eligible for these incentives. All public school students deserve access to teachers who have met these high national standards, regardless of whether they attend a departmental or charter school.

H.B. 1893, HD1 preserves the additional \$5,000 bonus for those teaching in hard-to-fill, high-turnover, or priority schools. This ensures that our most experienced and highly-qualified teachers are incentivized to serve in the communities where they are needed most.

By investing in our National Board Certified Teachers, we are investing in the quality of education for all of Hawai'i's keiki. We respectfully urge the committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo.

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:27:51 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kacie Seitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Kacie Seitz, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher serving as Curriculum Coordinator and Enrichment Teacher for grades 3–5 at Kamali‘i Elementary School in Kīhei, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 and respectfully urge you to pass it.

I pursued National Board Certification because I wanted to become the most reflective, responsive, and accomplished teacher I could be for my students. The process transformed my practice. It required me to analyze student work deeply, document growth, and examine how my instructional decisions impacted learners. Through that work, I strengthened my ability to foster meaningful discourse, respond to student thinking, and build equitable classrooms where every child’s voice matters. My students benefited immediately. I saw stronger reasoning, increased confidence, and more learners willing to take academic risks because I had sharpened my practice.

National Board Certification also strengthened my leadership. Today, I support teachers across grade levels in implementing high-impact instructional practices rooted in student voice, inquiry, and reflection. The ripple effect of one NBCT extends far beyond one classroom — it influences entire schools and communities.

Hawai‘i faces one of the highest costs of living in the nation. Many educators struggle to afford housing, remain in their communities, or justify staying in the profession long term. Increasing the annual incentive from \$5,000 to \$10,000 is not simply a bonus — it is a meaningful retention strategy. For accomplished teachers, this increase can be the difference between staying in Hawai‘i’s classrooms or seeking more financially sustainable options elsewhere. When experienced, highly trained teachers leave, students lose stability, mentorship, and instructional expertise. When they stay, students benefit from continuity, deep knowledge of community, and sustained relationships.

The research is clear: students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two additional months of learning each year. NBCTs remain in the profession at significantly higher rates than their peers. In a state working to address educator shortages and turnover, this investment is strategic, evidence-based, and student-centered.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is equally important. Charter school students are Hawai'i's students. They deserve equitable access to accomplished educators and professional recognition.

HB 1893 honors excellence, strengthens retention, and invests directly in student success. In a high-cost state like ours, doubling the incentive is both practical and powerful. I respectfully urge you to advance this bill and reaffirm Hawai'i's commitment to accomplished teaching.

Mahalo for your time and for your commitment to Hawai'i's educators and students.

Kacie Seitz  
National Board Certified Teacher  
Kamali'i Elementary School, Kīhei  
Hawai'i Department of Education

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:10:39 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy Deuz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

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

**My name is Cindy Deuz, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Red Hill Elementary School, Central District, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

Since starting my journey as an NBCT, I have become more reflective and purposeful in my instructional practices. It has helped me to achieve year over year gains towards student's meeting or exceeding proficiency in state testing. Because of the \$5,000 incentive, I have continued to teach, but as the cost of living rises, I am now needing to look elsewhere to earn enough to continue living in Hawaii. The additional \$5,000 increase would also greatly help to retain experienced teachers so our keiki can reap the benefits of having highly qualified teachers in the classroom.

**Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

**HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.**

**Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.**

**Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Cindy Deuz, NBCT, General Education Teacher**

**Red Hill Elementary School, Central District**

## HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Hannah Spencer, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Kamehameha Schools Kapalama in Honolulu, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

National Board Certification is the most prestigious certification an educator can get. The cream of the crop earn their NBC, those truly serious about their teaching earn their NBC, and those most dedicated to their students and career earn their NBC. It is not easy to accomplish, and thus it still serves as a strong measure of a teacher's aptitude and success as an educator.

As a private school teacher, I won't even directly benefit from this increase. And while I do believe it would encourage private institutions to earn their benefits as well, even if they don't, I still think this is an important move for the Hawaii State Legislature to take to show their continued support of DOE teachers, along with their retention and recruitment.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hannah Spencer, Kumu, Kamehameha Schools, [haspence@ksbe.edu](mailto:haspence@ksbe.edu)

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:24:59 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Yvette Rapozo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Todd and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 1893 which would increase National Board Certified Teachers pay incentive from \$5,000 a year to \$10,000. This will has been brought forward for several years and would encourgae more teachers to go through the national board process. The processs of becoming national board certified is not easy and takes a lot of time and reflection to complete. Those teachers that do go through the process are committed to becoming better teachers and improving their practice. When they go through the process, they are showing their committment to their students nad their students progress. They are committed in becoming better teachers and reaching more students. These teachers also stay in the prfessional longer and are more effective teachers. This bill will help to retain those effective teachers which ever school deserves.

I hope you pass this bill to help support teachers especially those who go above and beyond for their students.

Sincerely,

Yvette Rapozo

1st Grade teacher

HB 1893

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

My name is Scott Clarke, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at H.P. Baldwin High School on Maui. I am writing in very strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I embarked on my NBCT journey with a group of very qualified teachers back in 2007. At the time, there were few NBCT teachers on Maui, and to be honest, I really did not know much about the process. However, I quickly learned that becoming a NBCT was an extremely challenging and rewarding experience. I was encouraged to deeply reflect on my reasons for becoming an educator and how I foster a learning environment that encourages students to value education through a variety of instructional strategies. The process was by far the most impactful and valuable experience in shaping my 33 years of teaching.

Not only did the experience make me a better educator, but it also helped me become a better leader. After earning my certification, I went on to pursue additional roles in developing various phases of our school's professional development as a member of the school's leadership team. I also worked as the department chair for our school's Social Studies Department from 2008 until 2023. I'm not sure I would have pursued these roles if it had not been for the knowledge and confidence I gained from becoming a NBCT.

While I have evolved in many ways and benefited from being a NBCT, I would like to think my students have been benefactors as well. My National Board of Professional Teaching Certificate hangs on the wall in my classroom and reminds me that I have a duty to educate my students to the best of my ability on a daily basis. As I near the end of my career, I think I have carried out this mission as a quality educator based on the feedback I've received from students and parents over the years. A large part of my impact as a teacher is due to the NBCT process.

I highly encourage you to pass HB 1893 HD1 so other teachers can be properly incentivized to explore and complete the NBCT requirements. It is the best possible professional development that any teacher can take part in to impact the learning of their students. Believe me, after 33 years of teaching, I have participated in just about every form of professional development put forth by the Hawai'i Department of Education.

Sincerest regards,

Scott Clarke  
AP European History, Psychology, and Economics Teacher  
H.P. Baldwin High School

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 11:36:06 AM

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

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

Comments:

HB1893, HD1 – Strong Support

Aloha Chair Todd and CommitteeMembers,

I fully support HB1893, HD1.

National Board Certification is rigorous, time-intensive, and costly. Teachers who pursue and maintain this credential demonstrate a higher level of commitment, skill, and accountability in the classroom. If we truly value excellence in education, our policies must reflect that value.

Public charter school teachers should not be excluded from incentives simply because of the governance structure of their schools. They serve our keiki just the same and should be treated equitably under the law.

Increasing the annual bonus from \$5,000 to \$10,000 is not excessive—it is an investment in proven instructional quality. Strong teachers are the most direct and meaningful investment we can make in student achievement. If we want measurable outcomes and high standards, we must reward those who meet them.

This bill promotes merit, fairness, and accountability in education. I respectfully urge you to pass HB1893, HD1.

Mahalo for your leadership.

Teri Kia Savaiinaea

Wai'anae resident & D.O.E. Leeward District-Substitute Teacher

## HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Tracy Laferriere, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) at Waipahu High School, Leeward District, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

I confess, my primary reason for seeking certification in 2010 was purely for financial gain. As a teacher at the highest pay step, I saw the \$10,000 NBCT bonus (\$5,000 + \$5,000 for serving in high needs schools) as the only way to afford a living without having to get a second job. In 2012, after an intense two-year process, I was certified - the same year the legislature eliminated the \$5,000 bonus for teachers serving in low income/low performing schools. I cannot say for certain I would have initially endured the NBCT process for such a minimal tangible reward. Fortunately, I did complete the process, and I see now that the true benefits of being an NBCT stretch far beyond the bank account.

Since certification, I have grown immensely as an educator, and I use my experience to not only provide my students with high-quality educational opportunities, but also **impact teachers and students far beyond my classroom walls**. I have served in leadership roles at my school, as a mentor for new teachers, and have partnered with the state OCISS office on many endeavours such as updating the Social Studies standards, creating curriculum and resources that promote complex thinking, and I worked directly on the development and implementation of Hawaii's Schools of Democracy (HISOD) program.

To remain certified, NBCT's must complete a very rigorous Maintenance of Certification (MOC) every five years. This introspective work ensures that NBCT's are **continually reflecting and improving on their practices, and intentionally serving their students with excellence**, thus perpetuating both teacher- and student growth. My NBCT license expires the same year I qualify for retirement. Although I recognize the professional gains of being NBCT, I am uncertain if the current financial rewards are worth the effort needed to fulfill MOC requirements.

**Increasing the bonus will have a GREAT IMPACT on whether I will continue in this profession or retire as soon as possible.**

**Likewise, increasing the bonus is necessary if we want to encourage other Hawaii teachers to pursue NBCT, thus greatly improving teaching practices and student performance.** HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom. Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. **Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers.** This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Tracy Laferriere, NBCT

Social Studies Teacher, Academy of Public and Professional Services

Waipahu High School, Leeward District

[Tracy.Laferriere@k12.hi.us](mailto:Tracy.Laferriere@k12.hi.us)

[Fairywings220@gmail.com](mailto:Fairywings220@gmail.com)

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 12:42:46 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Jarrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Jackie Jarrell and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at the Waipahu campus of Hawaii Technology Academy, a charter school in the Leeward area of Oahu, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I became a National Board certified teacher in Maryland in 2014 and when I moved to Hawaii in 2021, I returned to the classroom, excited to apply my learning from my five years out of the school where I supported, coached, and mentored new teachers. In 2024, I achieved maintenance of my certification and was again struck by how that process continues to inform not only my practice and collaboration over a decade later, but the learning of our keiki.

Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jacquelyn Jarrell | Teacher | Hawaii Technology Academy, Charter  
School | [jjarrell@myhta.org](mailto:jjarrell@myhta.org)

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

Aloha kākou. My name is Faye McCully, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Konawaena Elementary School, in the HKKK Complex, Hawai'i District, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

Achieving National Board Certification transformed my teaching practice in profound and lasting ways. The process required deep reflection on my instructional decisions, student outcomes, and professional responsibilities. Through that reflection, I became more thoughtful and deliberate in how I meet the needs of each individual student. It pushed me to pursue continued professional learning, equipping me with additional strategies to support struggling learners while continuing to challenge advanced students to deepen their thinking. National Board Certification also strengthened my skills and confidence as an advocate for my students—especially very young children, children with special needs, and English learners. As a preschool teacher, I am often asked to explain to families and even fellow educators why we “play” all day. The certification process helped me clearly articulate, grounded in research and child development, the critical role that play has in building language, self-regulation, problem-solving, and social-emotional skills.

My students have directly benefited from this growth. I am more intentional about differentiation and more effective at designing inclusive learning experiences. I provide multiple pathways for students to engage with content and demonstrate understanding, recognizing and building upon each child's strengths. I have incorporated more student voice into my classroom, increasing motivation, curiosity, and joy in learning. Instruction is more responsive and relevant to them, and as a result, students are more engaged and confident learners.

One of the most meaningful outcomes has been the culture of inclusion in my classroom. When my academic coach observes, she consistently comments not only on how English learners and students with special needs are included in

lessons, but also on how their peers respond. In my classroom, accommodations and modifications are available to all students, whether or not they have an IEP, because we openly discuss that everyone's brain and body work differently. As a result, students do not view supports as special treatment. Instead, they accept differences as a normal part of our learning community. Last year, I had a student who wore leg braces and walked more slowly than her classmates, and we had alternate procedures in place to ensure her safety and independence. One day, when a substitute teacher urged her to hurry and keep up with the line, another preschool student turned and said, "[Name]'s legs work a little differently than ours. She just walks a little slower, and that's okay." At just four years old, my students are already learning to advocate for themselves and for one another. That empathy and confidence are the result of intentional, reflective teaching practices strengthened through National Board Certification.

At the same time, I have spoken with multiple talented educators who chose not to pursue, complete, or renew National Board Certification because they did not feel the process was worth the tremendous time and financial investment. Each component is expensive to attempt, and the overall workload required as much—if not more—time and effort than earning my master's degree. Without meaningful support, many excellent teachers will understandably decide that the cost is too high.

HB1893 would help remove these barriers and make this rigorous professional growth opportunity more accessible. When teachers grow, students benefit. I respectfully urge you to support HB1893 so that more educators in Hawai'i can strengthen their practice and better serve our keiki.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening

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The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. Additionally, NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Faye McCully

EOEL Preschool Teacher

Konawaena Elementary School

HKKK Complex, Hawai'i

faye.mccully@k12.hi.us

My name is Mary Gleason and I am a first grade Special Education Teacher at Lincoln Elementary in Makiki. I am writing in strong support of raising the National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) bonus from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Becoming a National Board Certified Teacher is one of the most rigorous and meaningful professional journeys an educator can undertake. The process requires hundreds of hours of reflection, analysis of student work, video recordings of instruction, and demonstrated evidence of measurable student growth. It is not simply an additional credential — it is a commitment to excellence in teaching and to continuous improvement for my students.

Here in Hawai'i, where we face ongoing teacher shortages and a high cost of living, incentives matter. We ask our teachers to do extraordinary work: to support students academically, socially, and emotionally, often while navigating limited resources and rising living expenses. Increasing the NBCT bonus to \$10,000 would send a powerful message that the State truly values accomplished teaching and is willing to invest in retaining highly effective educators.

National Board Certified Teachers serve as instructional leaders on their campuses. We mentor new teachers, lead professional development, collaborate on curriculum design, and model best practices grounded in research. The impact extends beyond our own classrooms — it strengthens entire schools. By raising the bonus, Hawai'i would encourage more teachers to pursue certification and would help keep experienced, high-quality educators in our public school system rather than losing them to mainland districts offering stronger financial incentives.

The return on investment is clear. Research consistently shows that students of National Board Certified Teachers demonstrate stronger academic outcomes. When we retain accomplished teachers, we provide stability for students and build long-term capacity within our schools.

I chose to teach in Hawai'i because I believe in our keiki and in the power of public education to uplift communities. Increasing the NBCT bonus would help ensure that teachers like me can continue to afford to live and serve here long-term. It would recognize the advanced expertise we bring and reinforce the State's commitment to educational excellence.

Mahalo for your time and consideration, and for your continued support of Hawai'i's educators and students. I respectfully urge you to support increasing the NBCT bonus from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Sincerely,

Mary Gleason  
Lincoln Elementary School  
Honolulu District- Roosevelt Complex Area

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 1:19:29 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Darice Carvalho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**My name is Darice Carvalho, and I am a newly National Board Certified Teacher at Waimea Elementary School on the island of Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**I see myself as a lifelong learner, and I believe that in order to positively impact student learning, I must continually grow in my own practice. Pursuing National Board Certification was a natural extension of that belief. I wanted to deepen my instructional expertise, refine my craft, and demonstrate that I meet the standards of an accomplished educator. For me, this process was not about a title—it was about becoming more effective for my students.**

**Through this process, my teaching is more intentional and reflective. I analyze student work more closely, use evidence to guide my instructional decisions, develop meaningful assessments that drive and refine my instruction, and differentiate more effectively to meet the diverse needs of my students.**

**Even after completing the process, I continue to reflect, refine, and improve my teaching practices. National Board Certification did not mark the end of my growth—it reinforced my commitment to continuous improvement for the benefit of my students.**

**Although I am a lifelong learner, I don't know if I would have truly completed National board without this incentive program. Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

**HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.**

**Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.**

**Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Darice Carvalho,nbct, Waimea Elementary School, Hawaii**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 2:37:10 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christine Russo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

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

**My name is Christine Russo and I am a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) at James Campbell High School in Ewa Beach. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**I earned my National Board Certification in Science/Early Adolescence in 2022. Earning NBCT was an extremely rigorous process and took several years however I persevered knowing that the time and effort I invested into the process would eventually pay off for myself, my students, and my school community. The fee support and prospect of an annual bonus were key elements in my decision to pursue certification. With that said, when I first committed to the process, certification was valid for 10 years. This has now changed and certification lasts just 5 years. Thus, I am already embarking on the process of maintaining National Board Certification, also known as MOC), which is another expense for my family in terms of both time and money.**

**I strongly believe that increasing the incentive for Nationally Board Certification from \$5000 to \$10,000 will be key in convincing teachers to pursue NBCT status. As mentioned, it is extremely rigorous and requires a reinvestment every five years. For most teachers, a \$5000 stipend is no longer a sufficient motivator to embark on such a demanding journey. However, it is in the state's best interest to ensure we are continuing to grow our pool of NBCTs. Research shows students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers.**

**Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to pass this measure.**

**Mahalo!**

**Christine Russo**



**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 3:17:46 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heather Wickersham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**My name is Heather Wickersham, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Konawaena High School, Kealahou, Hawai'i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**My National Board Teaching Certification(NBTC) improved my pedagogy significantly. I taught a testing grade and my students were testing above the state average and on the ACT were testing just above the National Average. I attribute this to the learning that occurred while achieving my NBTC. In addition, after achieving my NBTC, I moved into a leadership role at my school and have a strong influence on the quality of instruction with the entire faculty. The NBTC gives me credibility with the faculty and helps provide the quality education that our students deserve. Living in a rural area with a high cost of living, it's difficult to attract experienced educators. The additional money would help remedy this challenge.**

**If this bill is passed it supports the research behind this investment. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.**

**Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Heather Wickersham**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:08:46 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meredith Kuba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Meredith Kuba, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Punahou School. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I taught high school chemistry at Kamehameha Schools Kapalama for 10 years during which I earned my National Board Certification in 2017. Through the process of becoming certified I reflected on my teaching practice, analyzed student learning, and adapted my instructional practice to better support the diversity of my students. I recertified in 2022 and am currently in the process of recertifying again. Although I currently teach at Punahou School which does not provide any financial incentive for National Board Certified teachers, I find the process valuable to developing my teaching practice to positively impact student learning. The financial support and incentive that Kamehameha Schools provided was integral in my first step to certification.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

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Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Meredith T. Kuba, Ph.D.

Punahou School

AP Chemistry and Chemistry

mkuba@punahou.edu

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:30:58 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liam Conway-Nesson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of Increasing the Stipend for National Board Certification (NBCT) In the Hawai‘i State Legislature**

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Liam Conway-Nesson, and I am a public school English Language Arts teacher at Hilo High School. I am writing in strong support of increasing the stipend for educators who earn National Board Certification.

It took me five years of dedicated study, reflection, and portfolio work to achieve National Board Certification in Secondary English Language Arts. This process demanded the same level of rigor, research, documentation, and self-evaluation as earning an advanced degree. I already hold graduate-level credentials, and I can confidently say this self-directed professional journey was equivalent in depth and intensity to a master’s program—except it happened while I was teaching full-time, mentoring students, and supporting families through the COVID-19 pandemic.

I pursued National Board Certification because I wanted to become the kind of teacher our students deserve: reflective, evidence-driven, culturally responsive, and relentlessly committed to growth. What changed most in my teaching was not just my strategies—but my mindset. The process forced me to slow down and truly listen to student thinking. I learned to design instruction around how students learn, not just how content is delivered. My classroom shifted from being teacher-centered to student-powered.

One moment stands out clearly. During a unit on argumentative writing, I used to focus heavily on structure and correctness. Through the National Board process, I learned to anchor instruction in student voice, formative feedback, and revision cycles. One student—quiet, often disengaged, and reading well below grade level—submitted an argument connecting environmental justice in Hawai‘i to issues in our own community. With targeted feedback strategies I developed through National Board work, that student revised the piece multiple times, presented it to peers, and later told me it was the first time they felt their thinking “mattered in school.” That shift—from compliance to ownership—was a direct result of what I learned through National Board Certification.

Earning Board Certification also changed how long I plan to stay in the profession. Like many educators in Hawai‘i, I have felt the weight of burnout, financial pressure, and emotional exhaustion, particularly during and after the pandemic, and working as a public employee, underpaid and often with less-than-adequate facilities. The National Board process re-centered my purpose. It reminded me why I chose this profession in the first place: to serve our keiki with excellence. Knowing the state recognizes and values this level of professional growth through a meaningful stipend makes the difference between seeing teaching as a short-term sacrifice and a sustainable career.

National Board Certification also helped me grow as a leader. I now facilitate professional learning conversations with colleagues, support new teachers, and model reflective practice across departments; I also serve as Hilo High's Curriculum Coordinator. The process trained me to analyze student work with intention, use data ethically, and advocate for instructional practices that serve diverse learners. That leadership ripples outward—one certified teacher strengthens an entire school community.

Most importantly, my students gained. They gained stronger writing skills, deeper critical thinking, and increased confidence in their voices. English learners, students with learning differences, and those who previously felt invisible in academic spaces began to show measurable growth—not just in test scores, but in engagement, persistence, and self-belief. National Board Certification sharpened my ability to reach students who often fall through the cracks.

I also want to name the financial reality. I paid most of the National Board fees out of my own pocket while working full-time and supporting my family. The process required countless unpaid hours, emotional labor, and sustained commitment over five years. Increasing the stipend is not a reward so much as an investment in teacher excellence, retention, and student outcomes. It tells accomplished educators: *Your growth matters. Your expertise matters. Your students matter. And our community appreciates your effort.*

If Hawai‘i wants to retain high-quality educators—especially in rural and Title I communities—we must make it financially and professionally sustainable for teachers to pursue and maintain this level of excellence. Increasing the National Board stipend is one of the most direct, evidence-based ways to strengthen teaching and learning across our state.

Mahalo for your time and your commitment to Hawai‘i’s educators and students,

Liam Conway-Nesson, PhD  
Hilo, Hawai‘i

# HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Doreen Stone, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at King Kaumuali'i Elementary, Kauai, Central Complex, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I initially earned my National Board Certification in 2018, and renewed certification in 2023. When I began the process, I had no idea how rigorous the program was to be. This process involved a thorough self-examination and justification of my entire instructional decision process. Being a National Board teacher has changed the way I approach instruction. Individualized planning helps to include all students, and working at a Title I school has given me the opportunity to work with a vast spectrum of students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Doreen Stone, Teacher

King Kaumuali'i Elementary School

Kauai, Central Complex, Hawaii

dolini@gmail.com

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:06:28 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Xiaochen Gong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Xiaochen Gong, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Ali'iolani Elementary, Honolulu, Hawai'i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I was inspired by my fellow teacher colleagues who were National Board Certified Teachers when COVID hit us. I read about the standards and stories of NBCT candidates and I decided to pursue it because I wanted to improve my teaching so I could support my students better. It was a really challenging journey for me. I had to manage time to juggle with heavy workload, taking care of my own children, as well as being the primary care for my elderly parents. But I have been so grateful that I did it because I have become more confident in teaching and my students have been improving a lot. I have received numerous positive comments from the parents and colleagues.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

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Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Xiaochen Lily Gong

Special Education Teacher

Ali'iolani Elementary

Honolulu, Hawai'i

## HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Nancy Laukea, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Pāhoā High and Intermediate, District of Hawai'i, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I have been a teacher for 26 years and I began my National Board journey during my 10<sup>th</sup> year of teaching. I had just been named District Teacher of the Year here in Hawai'i. I was looking for a way to further improve my teaching practice. The rigor of the National Board process was exactly what I needed. Pushing myself gave me the perspective to push my students to achieve more than they originally believed they could. Watching a special education student make it to the State Science Fair or a young woman choose to follow a career in environmental management after learning the challenges our planet is facing in my AP Environmental Science class are a few of the pinnacle moments that show me that I am making a difference in the lives of my students. National Board status also gave me the means to continue a career as a teacher. The year before I gained my National Board status, Governor Abercrombie had just enacted a blanket pay cut of 5% for state employees that translated in truth to a 13% net decrease in my paycheck. As a single mother of two I had to choose between my retirement funds or making my electric payment. Electric won. While not solving all of my financial needs, the bonus that came with my certification allowed me a bit more of a buffer and was a major factor in my being able to continue my career as a teacher. While the financial incentive has certainly helped, the skills and knowledge I have acquired have allowed me to take on leadership roles within my school. I have been a School Level Leader for over 15 years, the Driver's Ed coordinator and instructor, and a leader on the testing committee at our school for over 10 years. While being quite varied in their purposes, I believe these roles in addition to my primary job as a teacher give me the chance to have a positive influence on the lives of my students. The bonus being proposed affords the respect for all I have achieved and continue to share with my school, my peers, and my students.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland (the state in which I grew up and attended school all the way through my attaining my BS of Psychology from University of Maryland – College Park) now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

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Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Nancy Iaukea, M.A.Ed., NBCT

Pāhoa High and Intermediate, District of Hawai'i

Nancy.Iaukea@k12.hi.us

# HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Shareen K. Murayama and I am a Poet and National Board Certified Teacher at Kaiser High School in Honolulu, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

Thousands of teachers lean in and hope that year after year this bill will be passed. This is me leaning in once more with hope:

Since returning to teaching in 2012, it was one of my goals to validate my love for my career. I have since renewed my certification in 2024 and have helped others biome or renew their certification. Over the years, I have supported **fewer and fewer teachers wishing to be certified** because the incentive does not match what teachers are getting **working another job, part-time outside of the DOE.**

Teachers can do the math. They can calculate that transitioning from part time to full time outside the education industry equals more pay for no take-home work on weekends nor volunteering to chaperone proms, Homecoming events, etc.

Incentivizing promotes good teacher retention. Good teachers engage, have high expectations, classroom management is an art form. Let's encourage the good eggs to stay in education.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Shareen K. Murayama,

International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme Coordinator  
Curriculum Coordinator  
New to Kaiser Teacher Support Lead  
TedEd Student Talk Club Advisor

Henry J. Kaiser High School  
FKK Honolulu District  
shareen.murayama@k12.hi.us

## HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Kim Virtudazo, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at James Campbell High School, in Ewa Beach, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it. As a public school teacher and public school parent of two, I've seen firsthand the impact NBCTs can make.

I earned my board certification in 2022 after diligently working on it for three years. Prior to beginning the process, I thought I was an effective teacher but NBCT challenged me and made me grow so much more. This process was the single most important and impactful professional development I've ever done in my 14 years of teaching. The National Boards demands a higher level of mindfulness, student centered teaching, rigor than any teacher program can provide. I can confidently say, I'm now a more mindful, intentional, effective, and compassionate teacher.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kim Q.T. Virtudazo | Academy Coordinator | James Campbell High School, Leeward District | [Kim.Virtudazo@k12.hi.us](mailto:Kim.Virtudazo@k12.hi.us)



**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 12:55:18 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rain K. Kahula Yong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in strong support of this measure relating to education, which clarifies that public charter school teachers are eligible for incentives under the Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program and increases the annual bonus for teachers who maintain current National Board Certification.

As a charter school teacher, I know firsthand the dedication and expertise required to maintain National Board Certification. However, without eligibility for these incentives, the work is not fully recognized or financially sustainable. This program is a critical way to boost compensation for teachers like me, who are committed to providing high-quality instruction but face financial challenges in Hawai‘i’s high cost-of-living environment.

National Board Certification represents one of the highest professional standards in education. Teachers who earn and maintain this certification demonstrate deep content knowledge, refined instructional practice, and a sustained commitment to student achievement. Ensuring that charter school teachers are included not only promotes fairness and equity but also encourages more educators to pursue and maintain this level of professional excellence.

Investing in National Board Certified teachers strengthens the quality of instruction and benefits all students across Hawai‘i’s public and charter schools.

Mahalo for your consideration and support of this important measure.

Respectfully,  
Rain Yong, teacher at Ka Waihona o ka Na‘auao PCS

Leeward Distrcit

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:27:28 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie T.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Julie, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Waikiki Elementary, Honolulu, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

This process has been a journey in refining my professional practice while meeting the diverse needs of every student. Not only will this increase help with Hawaii's rising costs, but it will revive the teaching community bringing more incentive to go through this reflective process. The growing number of board certified teachers at our school continues to impact student growth and engagement.

Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Julie T. / Gen Ed. / Waikiki Elementary, Honolulu

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:39:33 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shiloh Francis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in support of HB1893 for nationally board certified teachers in public charter schools to be eligible for incentives and for public and charter teachers who maintains current national board certification to have an increase from \$5,000 to \$10,000. I am a National Board Certified teacher in Hawai'i since 2011 that has worked at both public and public charter schools in Hawai'i since 2005. I think the distribution of funds should be the same for public and public charter teachers since we all work for the Department of Education and the students of Hawaii. I know first hand that obtaining and renewing of the national boards requires teachers to deeply reflect on our teaching practices by implementing data-driven instructional strategies that improve student outcomes. In turn, this impacts student achievement with the implementation of curriculum that is engaging and up to current teacher pedagogy. Another part of the national board process is teacher leadership and impact and involvement in their school and local community. National board teachers are helping lead the way for our students with engaging curriculum, are often mentors for new teachers, and are on the forefront of innovative educational practices. In 2024, I was named the Gilder Lehman History Teacher of the Year for Hawaii. I attribute much of my success as a teacher to the deep reflection that I do year after year to collect the data needed to first certify for and then maintain my national boards. Honoring the work with compensation that other national board teachers receive in other states for these highly qualified teachers will help lead to better teacher retention and can only be considered beneficial for all our students and schools (both public and public charter) across Hawai'i. I strongly recommend the passage of HB1893.

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 2:17:31 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
shelly cassler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**My name is Shelly Cassler, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at King Kaunualii, Kauai, Hawai'i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**I was drawn to pursue National Board Certification because I had maxed out in the pay scale "classes" for teachers. I felt this would be a way to increase my pay with the monetary incentive and continue growing professionally.**

**The experience of going through National Board Certification, has made me a more reflective teacher. It taught me to continuously assess myself in what I'm doing and how effective I am being, thus impacting student learning.**

**Since being certified and recertified, I have encouraged and assisted others in going through the process.**

**However, number of hours it takes to go through the process does not match the incentive being offered. I have even considered whether it is worth it for me to re-certify. If Hawaii wants more teachers to be certified, it needs to be more appealing. The monetary incentive is a big draw to going through certification. \$5,000 in today's economic world will not go far. Also, since being certified, the number of years the certificate is valid has gone down to only 5 years (whereas before, it was 10). Part of these 5 years is used to recertify, thus making the period of certification time roughly only 4 years. Hawaii needs to do more if they want more National Board Certified teachers.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.**

**Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Shelly S. Cassler**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 2:26:10 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie Ford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

3/1/2026

HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Jessie Ford, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Molokai High School, Molokai, Hawai‘i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I am a new NBCT teacher in the area of exceptionalities. As a special education teacher in a remote, geographically isolated, and hard to fill area, I sought meaningful professional development through the National Board process because I wanted to know more about special education law so I could be a stronger advocate. In the process, I gained insight and confidence in my own practice through rigorous examination and self-reflection of my role as a special educator. It was an extremely rigorous process that I feel has significantly improved my practice in working with secondary students who have exceptionalities.

I would NOT have done the National Board for a \$5,000 annual stipend. Because of my hard to fill location, I will receive \$10,000 annually. It is absolutely worth the incentive to encourage more teachers to attempt National Board certification. We are extremely busy with numerous demands on our time as we educate Hawaii’s students. Any professional development must result in an advantage reflective of the demands of the task. A \$5,000 stipend just would not be sufficient to incentivize me at the outset, and I know other educators who feel the same. Ultimately, students benefit from my status as NBCT, because I am more confident, more specifically reflective in my practice, and stronger as a student advocate. I received targeted feedback on my portfolios, and am incorporating recommendations into my practice.

Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

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Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jessie Ford, MEdT, NBCT

Teacher, Special Education & English

Molokai High School

Hana-Lahainaluna-Lanai-Molokai Complex Area

[jesserinford@gmail.com](mailto:jesserinford@gmail.com)

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

My name is Laura Ginoza, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Pearl City Elementary School, in Pearl City, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I was drawn to pursue certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards as a way to strengthen and solidify my teaching practice. The National Board process is rigorous and deeply reflective. It requires careful analysis of instructional decisions, student work, assessment data, and classroom interactions. This process often takes upwards of 200+ hours because you are forced to examine not only what you teach, but how and why you teach it. This intentional reflection ultimately helps you become a more thoughtful, effective educator.

As a National Board Certified Teacher, I understand that each learner enters the classroom with unique experiences, cultural backgrounds, abilities, and interests that shape how they learn. It is my responsibility to recognize and respond to these differences. I believe that all students can learn and grow when provided with high expectations, meaningful support, and a positive learning environment.

To meet my students' diverse needs, I intentionally analyze their strengths, areas for growth, interests, and learning profiles. I use this knowledge to design instruction that is purposeful, differentiated, and engaging. By adapting content, process, and assessment, I ensure that each student has access to rigorous learning opportunities while receiving the support necessary for success.

In my classroom, I cultivate a safe, inclusive, and equitable environment where all students feel valued and respected. I understand that strong relationships are foundational to learning and work to build trust with and among my students.

Finally, I see myself as a lifelong learner. I actively seek professional development opportunities, collaborate with colleagues, and continuously reflect on my practice. I strive to deepen the rigor and relevance of my instruction so that I can maximize my impact on student learning. National Board Certification is not simply a credential; it represents an ongoing commitment to growth and service to my students.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

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Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Laura Ginoza  
Librarian & ELL Coordinator  
Pearl City Elementary  
Leeward District  
babyginoza@yahoo.com

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**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 3:03:54 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corey Yasuda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

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

**My name is Corey Yasuda, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Liholiho Elementary School, Honolulu, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**As an elementary school teacher, I primarily teach kindergarten and first grade students. I am currently a first grade teacher. About 13 year ago, I voluntarily pursued National Board Certification as a strong vehicle to learn more about myself as an educator and a way to connect with a strong community of educators outside of my current schools. Initially, I underestimated the challenge I had taken upon myself. I knew there would be countless rigorous and reflective conversations that would make a direct impact with my students academic growth. I am grateful for my colleagues and new friends that have supported me on my journey. They have helped me to refine and deepen my pedagogical knowledge. As I was going through the process of integrating instruction, I found that my students were developing a deeper understanding of the subject matter and they were able to both agree with each other's thinking as well as to respectfully disagree using evidence. This is an example that was captured on video as the students were incorporating social studies and art. Today, these student driven conversations continue support English Language Learners. Four years ago, I had a student from Japan that spoke very little English. I am happy to report that as a fourth grader, he has exited the English Language Learner Program and currently serves our on school's student council.**

**Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

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**need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.**

**Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.**

**Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 3:05:47 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Provencio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Jennifer Provencio, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Moanalua Middle in the Central district, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I respectfully urge you to pass this measure.

I pursued National Board Certification because I wanted to deeply reflect on my teaching and ensure I was using current best practices to effectively reach and support my students. The process required me to analyze my instruction, examine student work closely, and think intentionally about how I engage learners of all abilities.

Through this process, my teaching changed in meaningful ways. I became more intentional about designing engaging lessons and more present with my students– making eye contact, listening carefully, and finding the right balance between caring and high expectations. I learned strategies that help students think critically, take ownership of their learning, and reflect on their growth.

One of the most impactful shifts in my classroom has been incorporating place-based learning. The National Board pushed me to think about how students connect learning to their community and lived experiences. As a result, I have built stronger community partnerships and created lessons that feel relevant and meaningful to my students here in Hawai‘i. When students see the connection between their classroom learning and their community, their engagement and motivation increase significantly.

My students have benefited from these changes. I have seen students who were once hesitant become more engaged, more accountable, and more confident in their abilities. They demonstrate not only academic growth, but also growth in reflection, collaboration, and kindness. I use daily reflection and recognition systems to reinforce learning and positive contributions to our classroom community. However, these materials and incentives come at a personal cost, and the time required to design and implement meaningful, place-based experiences extends far beyond regular school hours of grading and lesson planning.

National Board Certification has also strengthened my commitment to the profession. Having completed the initial certification and the renewal process, I continue to grow and refine my practice. It has given me the confidence to serve as a teacher leader, sharing effective strategies

with colleagues, presenting in professional groups, and contributing to our broader educational community.

Hawai‘i once had one of the most competitive National Board incentives in the nation. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for National Board Certified Teachers, along with additional bonuses for those in high-need schools, and have seen dramatic increases in certification as a result. Hawai‘i has not experienced similar growth in recent years, and that gap affects our ability to retain and attract accomplished educators.

HB 1893 restores Hawai‘i’s commitment to accomplished teaching by providing a \$10,000 annual bonus for National Board Certified Teachers, with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools. Research shows that students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two additional months of learning per year compared to their peers. National Board Certified Teachers also remain in the profession at significantly higher rates — a retention advantage that is critical for Hawai‘i’s students.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is equally important. All students in Hawai‘i deserve access to accomplished educators, regardless of the type of public school they attend.

Every student in Hawai‘i deserves a teacher who is committed to continuous growth and demonstrated excellence. HB 1893 is an investment in students, in teacher leadership, and in the long-term stability of our schools.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I respectfully urge you to advance HB 1893 HD1.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Provencio

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 3:06:51 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ernescia Torricer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Ernescia Torricer, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Red Hill Elementary School, Central District, Hawai'i. I'm writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and urge this committee to pass it. Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. Hawai'i educators has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students receiving high quality teaching. HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom. We are the teachers that our students deserve!

Research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. Furthermore, pursuing Board certification is a long and rigorous process that required me to analyze my instruction, document evidence of student growth, and reflect systemtically on my practice. It was the most demanding and meaningful professional development I have experienced because overall it improved my teaching practices. The process of becoming a NBCT required dedicated time, effort, and often personal expense. That required time is also necessary for NBCT renewal. Higher pay acknowledges that investment and helps ensure compensation reflects dedication and skill. It pushed me to grow in ways that transformed both my teaching practice and my students' learning experiences with intentional lesson planning using student data and evidence to adjust instruction in real time.

Every student deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence in the field of teaching and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance this bill.

Mahalo for the opporunity to testify,

Ernescia Torricer, Second Grade Teacher at Red Hill Elementary

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 3:49:46 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melissa Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**My name is Melissa Ching, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Princess Victoria Ka‘iulani Elementary School in Honolulu District. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1 to increase the National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) incentive from \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually. I urge this committee to pass it.**

**I first earned my National Board Certification in 2019. It was one of the most rigorous professional challenges of my career. Unlike many professional development programs, the National Board process requires a deep, evidence-based demonstration of teaching practice. I completed this journey alongside a cohort of dedicated teachers. To this day, we remain in contact, trading resources, learning opportunities, and supporting one another’s growth.**

**Maintaining my certification has transformed me into a more reflective practitioner. My growth has been specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of my school’s population in two vital areas:**

- 1. Bridging the Digital Divide: Many of my students face significant barriers to technology and high-speed internet at home. I have dedicated my practice to ensuring these students develop the critical digital literacy skills they need to remain competitive. By integrating these skills into the daily curriculum, I am ensuring that a lack of resources at home does not result in a lifelong achievement gap. Beyond basic literacy, I leverage specific digital tools to provide instructional supports to accelerate learning gains for our most vulnerable students.**
- 2. Agricultural & Career Education: I have integrated agricultural education into my curriculum through hands-on learning. This connects STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education, health education and Career and Technical Education (CTE) to the land, providing my students with tangible skills that are culturally relevant and economically vital to Hawaii’s future.**

**The current \$5,000 incentive has stayed stagnant for years while the cost of living has risen and the demands on teachers have increased significantly. Doubling this incentive to \$10,000 sends a clear message that expertise and excellence are valued. This is an essential**

**reinvestment in teachers who have proven they can elevate instruction and transform students' classroom experiences.**

**I urge you to pass this measure to ensure Hawaii can recruit and retain the highly reflective, master-level teachers our keiki deserve.**

**Mahalo for your time and for your support of Hawaii's educators.**

**Sincerely,**

**Melissa Ching**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 4:22:17 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Sarpi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Jen Sarpi, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Pearl Ridge Elementary School, Central District, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

This process has helped me to build confidence to better support the children at my school.

Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

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Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 4:28:52 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katy Parsons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of HB 1893**

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kathryn “Katy” Parsons, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher in Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893, which would increase the National Board Certification (NBC) bonus and extend eligibility to charter school teachers.

National Board Certification is not simply an additional credential; it is one of the most rigorous and reflective professional development processes available to educators. The process requires deep analysis of student work, data-driven instructional decisions, intentional differentiation, and continuous reflection on how our teaching directly impacts student outcomes. It strengthens our practice in measurable ways and directly benefits students, especially those who are most vulnerable.

The current bonus has helped make this demanding professional journey financially feasible. The time commitment for National Board Certification is substantial. Teachers invest hundreds of hours outside of contract time, on evenings, weekends, and during school breaks, refining lessons, analyzing student data, and documenting growth. For many of us, especially single parents and teachers already balancing multiple responsibilities, this is a significant personal sacrifice.

Increasing the bonus to \$10,000 would send a powerful message that Hawai‘i values accomplished teaching and wants to retain highly qualified educators in our classrooms.

For struggling single mothers in the profession, this increase is not abstract. It can mean:

- Covering rising housing costs
- Paying for childcare while completing professional development work
- Reducing financial stress so we can focus fully on our students
- Investing in classroom resources that directly benefit children

For teachers more broadly, the increased incentive makes pursuing National Board Certification worthwhile and sustainable. It acknowledges that advanced professional growth requires time, energy, and financial stability. When teachers are supported, students benefit.

States that have strengthened their National Board incentives have seen increases in the number of accomplished teachers and improved retention. At a time when Hawai'i continues to face teacher shortages and rising living costs, we must create conditions that encourage our strongest educators to stay and grow here.

National Board Certification is the black belt of teaching; a mark of mastery earned through rigorous evidence and impact. By increasing this bonus, Hawai'i signals that it honors excellence and invests in the teachers who continually invest in our students.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge you to support HB 1893.

Mahalo,

Katy Parsons  
National Board Certified Teacher  
Castle High School

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 5:16:29 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Micah Benavitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

**HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i’s incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.**

**Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.**

**With the rising cost of living in Hawaii it is difficult to continue teaching education in this state. As a result over the years some of my colleagues moved out of state, or changed professions. I myself am always contemplating to stay in Hawaii or to teach out of state since my NBCT certification is valued more than in Hawai‘i .**

**Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 5:59:01 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Justine M Miyashiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Justine Miyashiro, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Ewa Makai Middle School, Leeward District, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

~Justine Miyashiro

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 6:54:28 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandon Galarita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Brandon Galarita, and I am a newly National Board Certified Teacher at Princess Ruth Ke'elikolani Middle School. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

The NBCT process challenges you to analyze and reflect upon every aspect of my day-to-day work in and outside the classroom--from understanding who the specific students are in my classroom, determining their needs, setting high and achievable goals for them, analyzing their growth, and reflecting upon both their learning and what processes I took to help get them there. Having recently achieved National Board Certification, there is no doubt that my teaching ability has grown significantly because of this and I encourage all of my colleagues to pursue the process, not only for the money, but to provide a better education for our students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth through the National Board Certification process. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Brandon Galarita, NBCT | 6-8 English/language arts | Princess Ruth Ke'elikolani Middle School

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 7:05:00 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Logan Okita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Logan Okita, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Nimitz Elementary School, Central District. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

Being a National Board Certified Teacher not only improved my practice in the classroom and my reflection to improve student achievement, but it also prompted my leadership journey. While pursuing certification, I realized that many teachers do not talk about the impact they have on students. After becoming certified, I began encouraging others to pursue certification and supporting them through the process. It allowed me to work with educators from across the country to incorporate professional learning that helps educators pursue certification. When I have thought about leaving education or have been frustrated with the system, the reflective process of certification has helped me to see the impact I have as an educator and what I can do to feel refreshed and continue.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Logan Okita, MEd, NBCT

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 7:44:40 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Vanessa Race	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Vanessa Race and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Dole Middle School, Honolulu, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I pursued National Board Certification to deepen my teaching practice and better meet the diverse needs of my students. Through the process, I became more intentional in designing lessons that encourage critical thinking and authentic engagement. One moment that stands out is when a student who had previously struggled with confidence took the lead in a group project, demonstrating skills I hadn’t realized they possessed. Board certification strengthened my leadership by helping me mentor BYUH student teachers and advocate for best practices in the classroom. Ultimately, my students gained not just content knowledge but the confidence and curiosity to take academic risks.

Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Vanessa Race | Teacher | Dole Middle School, Honolulu | [vrace.hi@gmail.com](mailto:vrace.hi@gmail.com)

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:56:56 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amber Olson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Amber Olson, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Kula Elementary School, in the Kekaulike District of Maui. **I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

I chose to pursue National Board Certification primarily to help my family offset the high cost of living in Upcountry Maui. We talk often about "homegrown" teachers, but the reality is that without competitive pay, many of our best educators are forced to leave the state or the profession entirely. **The NBCT stipend was the direct motivation that allowed me to stay and continue my career here in Hawai'i.**

The NBCT process did more than just provide financial stability; it transformed my practice. This certification pushed me to grow into new leadership roles within the DOE where I can now make an impact beyond a single classroom. In my current role as a Curriculum Coordinator and Academic Coach at Kula School, I support:

- All PK-5 classrooms to ensure high-quality instruction school-wide.
- Specialized Literacy Instruction through my work as an Early and Middle Childhood Literacy specialist.
- Innovative Pedagogy including arts integration, ‘āina-based learning, and project-based learning.

National Board Certification is a rigorous investment in student outcomes. By maintaining this certification, I have been able to provide our students with real-world, highly engaging learning strategies that bridge the gap between the classroom and future career and technical education.

Personal feelings aside, there is research available that demonstrates the impact of this investment. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Amber Olson, NBCT

Curriculum Coordinator

Kula School, Kekaulike District

[amber.olson@k12.hi.us](mailto:amber.olson@k12.hi.us)

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:40:14 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kryssa Isobe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Kryssa Isobe, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Leihōkū Elementary in the Leeward District. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

As a teacher, we are models of what it means to be a lifelong learner. Deciding to pursue my National Board Certification was a difficult one primarily due to financial and time constraints. Classroom teachers like myself often work well beyond our contracted hours, and to dedicate hours of additional work to complete National Board Certification only makes the work days longer. That's compounded with the steep fees for completing each component. With motivation from colleagues, support from community resources like INPEACE, and a family willing to take on additional responsibilities at home while I worked on my certifications, I was able to attain certification. Being intentional and reflecting on my work in the classroom helped me become a better educator. As a result of the process (and continued process of maintaining certification), I can show up for my students daily knowing I am giving them the best I can offer. National Board has made me examine my pedagogy, assessment and data collection, and relationships with students, colleagues, and the community. The impacts last well beyond the year(s) that we work on certification -- it changes who we are as educators.

Now let's be honest...the reflective nature of the certification process helps ensure that we are thinking about bettering ourselves. It's something that any good teacher does anyway whether they are National Board certified or not. However, to take on such a daunting and costly attempt to certify and maintain certification is a huge commitment. Without the incentive, I don't think I would continue to put myself through all of that extra work. Having the financial incentive is a highly effective way to draw in more educators to take on the task as well as keep those of us who are already certified to keep pursuing it. There is a high turnover rate of teachers at my school and across the complex I work in. Statewide, there's been reports of teacher shortages for years. It's best that we show that highly qualified teachers are valued and encouraged. National Board Certification incentives will continue to motivate certified teachers to keep maintaining their certification as well as draw in more teachers.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results:

Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i’s incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kryssa Isobe, Teacher

Leihōkū Elementary, Leeward

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:52:23 PM

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

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

Comments:

**My name is Nicole Romero, and I am a teacher at Mililani Uka Elementary School, Central District, currently pursuing National Board Certification. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893, which would double the annual bonus for National Board Certified Teachers and extend program eligibility to public charter school teachers.**

**I am pursuing National Board Certification because I know it will make me a better teacher. The process is rigorous. It requires educators to analyze their instruction, document clear evidence of student growth, and reflect systematically on their practice. It is without question the most demanding and meaningful professional development I have experienced.**

**Hawai'i has already taken important steps to support this work by reimbursing certification fees, and I am grateful for that foundation. HB 1893 builds on that commitment. Doubling the annual bonus from \$5,000 to \$10,000 makes Hawai'i competitive again. States such as Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually and have seen dramatic increases, nearly 980 percent, in teachers newly earning National Board Certification as a result. Hawai'i should do everything possible to compete for and retain the nation's strongest educator workforce.**

**The research on National Board Certification is clear. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two additional months of learning within a single school year. They are significantly more likely to score proficient on literacy assessments. In some studies, kindergarten students taught by NBCTs were 31 percent more likely to reach proficiency. Additionally, National Board Certified Teachers remain in the profession at three times the rate of their peers, providing the stability and expertise that Hawai'i's schools urgently need.**

**Including charter school teachers in this program is also the right thing to do. Charter school students are Hawai'i's students. They deserve access to accomplished teachers just as traditional public school students do.**

**I am in the middle of this journey because I believe deeply in what it produces for teachers and for students. I respectfully urge this committee to advance HB 1893 and help Hawai'i lead again.**

**Mahalo for your time and your commitment to Hawai'i's students.**

**Nicole Romero | EL/GT Teacher | Mililani Uka Elementary School,  
Central | [Nicole.Romero@k12.hi.us](mailto:Nicole.Romero@k12.hi.us)**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 10:09:53 PM

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

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

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1893**

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

My name is Jonathan Loomis, and I am a National Board Certified high school teacher in Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of House Bill 1893, which clarifies that public charter school teachers are eligible for incentives under the Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program and increases the annual bonus for maintaining certification from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

As someone who has completed the National Board Certification process, I can personally attest that earning certification is both rigorous and demanding. The process requires extensive reflection, analysis of student learning, careful documentation of instructional practice, and deep engagement with professional standards. Because it is lengthy and intellectually challenging, it can feel daunting and even discouraging to teachers who may be considering it.

However, it was also one of the most meaningful professional learning experiences of my career. The structured reflection and writing about my own practice forced me to examine my instruction more critically, analyze student outcomes more thoughtfully, and refine my strategies with greater intention. I grew significantly as both a teacher and a professional as a result of completing the process.

The increased financial incentive proposed in this bill would serve two important purposes. First, it would make the effort and time commitment more worthwhile for teachers who are on the fence about pursuing certification. Second, it would signal that Hawai‘i values advanced professional expertise in the classroom. Encouraging more teachers, both in traditional public schools and public charter schools, to pursue and maintain National Board Certification will strengthen instructional quality statewide.

Ultimately, this investment benefits students. When teachers engage deeply in reflection, assessment, and refinement of their practice, students experience stronger instruction and improved learning outcomes.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 1893.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Loomis

National Board Certified Teacher

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 10:58:49 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Yanase	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**My name is Lisa Yanase, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Waialu Elementary School, Central District, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**I was certified in 2001 and renewed the certification 2 more times after that. The process is rigorous, but well worth a teacher's effort to improve their own pedagogy. The process allowed me to be highly reflective in my own teaching and analyze my teaching as well as the students. Because the process has allowed me to be more cognizant of how I teach, a few students with whom I worked in small groups for math showed great gains in the state test and met proficiency after taking the math portion. These gains helped me realize the importance of the teacher's craft by reflecting on and analyzing their own teaching on student learning to adjust their teaching to meet student needs. This process is highly beneficial to retain highly qualified educators.**

**Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

**HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs**

**leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.**

**Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.**

**Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**If we want our students to succeed, we need to invest in our future. This begins with the teacher. We want to promote and retain teachers who are board-certified and are interested in becoming board-certified. If we want our students to flourish and be a bright part of our future, then we must invest in them. If we want quality, we need to support the teachers in improving their teaching. In the end, we get what we pay for; the price of a quality education is worth the investment.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Lisa Yanase**

**National Board Certified teacher 2001, 2011, 2021**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:08:25 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Fong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

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

**My name is Cathy Fong, and I am a teacher at Liholiho Elementary, Honolulu District, currently pursuing National Board Certification. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893, which would double the annual bonus for National Board Certified Teachers and extend program eligibility to public charter school teachers.**

**I am a two time Board Certified teacher and I am pursuing Board certification for the third time because I know it makes me a better teacher. The process is rigorous — it requires teachers to analyze their own instruction, document evidence of student growth, and reflect systematically on their practice. It is the most demanding and meaningful professional development experience. I am pursuing Board Certification once again because I value the professional development that this process provides. Each time that I have pursued National Board certification, I have learned new things about my teaching practices and the effectiveness of the strategies that I use to teach my students.**

**Hawai'i has taken important steps to support this work, including reimbursing certification fees — and I am grateful for that foundation. HB 1893 builds on it. Doubling the annual bonus from \$5,000 to \$10,000 makes Hawai'i competitive again. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually and have seen a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification as a result. Hawai'i should do everything it can to compete for the nation's best educator workforce.**

**The research on National Board Certification is clear. Students taught by NBCTs gain one to two months of additional learning in a single school year. They are significantly more likely to score proficient on literacy assessments — 31 percent more likely in studies of kindergarteners with NBCT teachers. And NBCTs stay in the profession at three times the rate of their peers, providing the stability and expertise that Hawai'i's schools urgently need.**

**Including charter school teachers in this program is the right thing to do as well. Charter school students are Hawai'i's students. They deserve access to accomplished teachers just as public school students do.**

**I am in the middle of this journey because I believe in what it produces — for teachers and for students. I urge this committee to advance HB 1893 and help Hawai'i lead again.**

**Mahalo for your time and your commitment to Hawai'i's students.**

**Cathy Fong | Teacher | Liholiho Elementary, Honolulu | [punreading3@aol.com](mailto:punreading3@aol.com)**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:18:36 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**My name is Janice Lee and I am a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) at Mililani Uka Elementary School. With over 20 years of service within the Hawai'i State Department of Education, I am writing to express my strong support for HB 1893.**

**In my two decades of teaching, the National Board Certification process stands out as the most demanding and transformative professional development I have ever experienced. It shifted my focus from simply delivering a curriculum to engaging in deep, evidence-based reflection, teaching me to measure my success by the specific growth and achievement of every student in my classroom.**

**It is important to recognize that National Board Certification is not a static achievement or a one-time degree. To maintain this "gold standard" status, I must successfully complete a rigorous Maintenance of Certification process every five years. This requires me to pay my own application fees and undergo an intensive peer-review process to prove that my teaching practices remain at the top of the field. By increasing the bonus for NBCTs, HB 1893 acknowledges this ongoing commitment to excellence and ensures that our state's most accomplished educators are supported as they continuously refine their craft.**

**Beyond the personal commitment of the teacher, this bill represents a proven investment in student outcomes. National research consistently demonstrates that students taught by NBCTs make higher gains in less time, particularly in high-need subject areas. In an era where we face critical teacher shortages and high turnover rates, this bonus serves as an essential retention tool. It provides a tangible, financial reason for our most experienced and effective educators to stay in the classroom where they are needed most, rather than moving into administration or leaving the profession entirely.**

**Every student deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and remains committed to professional growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable by properly valuing the expertise that NBCTs bring to our schools every day. I respectfully urge this committee to advance this bill and invest in the quality of instruction our students receive.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Janice Lee**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:11:43 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joy Okano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Joy Okano, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Moanalua High School in the Central District of Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

Pursuing National Board Certification transformed how I analyze student evidence; I stopped looking at what my students were doing and started looking at what they were actually learning. I vividly remember a struggling reader in my third-period class who finally made a breakthrough because the NBCT process taught me how to tailor my scaffolding to his specific linguistic needs. Seeing that kind of measurable growth is what keeps me in the classroom. This certification didn't just make me a better teacher; it made me a more intentional one, and my students are the ones who reap the rewards every single day.

Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Joy Okano

Regular Education Teacher

Moanalua High School

Central District

Joy.Okano@k12.hi.us

## HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

Aloha! My name is Naomi Kamauoha, and I am a Native Hawaiian Educator who is a National Board Certified Teacher at Lincoln Elementary School in Honolulu, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

As a Native Hawaiian educator serving Native Hawaiian students in the Papakōlea, Kewalo, and Kalāwahine areas, I pursued National Board Certification because I felt a deep kuleana to our keiki and our lāhui. I wanted to ensure that my teaching honored who my students are, their culture, their 'ike (knowledge), and their families, while also holding them to the highest academic standards. I knew I could do more to meet their needs, especially those who often struggle and sit quietly in the back, unsure if school is really for them.

The National Board process encouraged me to reflect deeply on my instructional practice. It required me to examine how well I truly knew my students, not just academically, but culturally and personally. My planning became more intentional as I built relationships with my students and their families. I learned more about my culture as well as my students' cultures and integrated it into my units. Many students come from multigenerational families. Students had a hard time articulating their thoughts in writing. The National Board process helped me to create lessons where students learned more about their culture through interaction with family members. This allowed students to discover their own family history and the accomplishments of their ancestors giving them the courage to kūlia ika nu'u which means to strive to reach the highest as they wrote about their families. Early on in my National Board process, I visited families in Pālolo Housing to encourage and uplift students and their families focusing on positive behaviors that their child demonstrates and how families can support them in their attendance and learning. Home visits continued during covid when I taught at Lincoln Elementary as I brought needed relief to struggling families. This was a result of the National Board process. I realized the importance of my kūleana in focusing on the whole student. I analyzed student work more deeply and used it to guide instructional changes that would inspire student voice and participation in their learning with the support of their families.

Teaching in Hawai'i can be financially and emotionally challenging. The current \$5,000 incentive acknowledges the rigor of National Board Certification, but increasing it to \$10,000 would send a powerful message to educators that Hawai'i values accomplished teaching and wants to retain their teachers. Knowing that Hawai'i meaningfully invests in proficient teachers would motivate educators to go through the National Board process to make a greater impact on the lives of students and influence teachers to continue teaching here in Hawai'i rather than seeking opportunities elsewhere.

Increasing the incentive to \$10,000 will not just reward teachers. It will directly benefit students across Hawai'i by retaining highly effective educators in our classrooms, especially in schools and communities that need stability the most. HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer and is a direct investment in educators who are committed to staying in the classroom.

National Board Certified Teachers are strengthening instruction, mentoring peers, and raising the bar for what is possible for our keiki. This bill is an investment in quality teaching, teacher retention, and ultimately in the future of Hawai'i. Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

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

Naomi Kamauoha

National Board Certified Teacher

Lincoln Elementary School, Honolulu

naomi.kamauoha@k12.hi.us

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:34:48 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
erin okamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**My name is Erin Okamoto, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) at Pearl City Elementary, Leeward District, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**In January of 2023, I decided to take the leap and commit myself to achieving my NBCT certification after years of being on the fence about it. I am a teacher who is constantly seeking to take myself to the next level, and this was the next step for me to be better for my students. As it turns out, this process helped me to grow, not only as a teacher, but as a colleague and a leader. I have encouraged many others to take the leap and have volunteered to mentor other teachers. What the NBCT certification offers my students is a promise that I am constantly striving to be better, aiming to use my knowledge and data to drive my instruction, and a desire to consistently incorporate best practices as a teacher. This is no small feat, especially in a Title I school, like Pearl City Elementary, where the parents are more worried about putting food on the table or making ends meet. My students are offered the chance to be pushed to their full potential and begin to believe in themselves beyond what they have ever imagined.**

**Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

**HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i’s incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs**

**leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.**

**Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.**

**Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Erin Okamoto, NBCT Generalist**

**Third Grade Teacher, Pearl City Elementary School, Leeward District**

**okam3911@gmail.com**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:35:49 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Riley Jaeger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Riley Jaeger. I serve as a Temporary Assigned Vice Principal with the Hawai‘i State Department of Education. I am submitting this testimony in my individual capacity and not as a representative of the Department.

I strongly support HB 1893 and the proposal to increase the National Board Certification stipend from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

I earned National Board Certification as a classroom teacher, and I can speak firsthand to the rigor and impact of the process. National Board Certification is not a hoop to jump through. It is not a compliance exercise. It is a deeply reflective and demanding professional process that requires teachers to analyze their instructional decisions, examine student work, reflect on their impact on diverse learners, and articulate how they adjust practice to meet the needs of all students.

The process forces educators to ask hard questions:

- How do I know my students are learning?
- Whose needs am I missing?
- How does my background influence my expectations?
- What evidence shows that my instructional decisions are improving outcomes?

That level of reflection strengthens teaching practice in ways that directly benefit students.

Now serving in a school leadership role, I see clearly how National Board Certified Teachers elevate professional standards across a campus. They model reflective practice, data-informed decision making, and equity-centered instruction. The certification process professionalizes teaching. It signals that teaching is not just a job, but a disciplined, research-based profession grounded in evidence and continuous improvement.

Increasing the stipend to \$10,000 sends a strong message that Hawai‘i values accomplished teaching and is willing to invest in retaining and recognizing highly skilled educators. The workload required to achieve and maintain National Board Certification is significant. A meaningful stipend acknowledges that effort and encourages more teachers to pursue the credential.

If we want to improve student outcomes, we must invest in teacher quality. Supporting National Board Certification is a direct investment in instructional excellence, professional growth, and equity for all students across our state.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support HB 1893.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**RE: Testimony in Support of HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

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

My name is Jade Pham Wall and I am a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) certified in the area of Exceptional Needs Specialist in Mild/Moderate Disabilities. I currently serve as a Vice Principal at Ala Wai Elementary. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893, and I urge this committee to pass it to ensure our students have access to the highest level of teaching expertise.

The heart of this bill is its commitment to student success by doubling the annual NBCT bonus to \$10,000. This investment is supported by research showing that **students taught by NBCTs gain up to two months of additional learning per year** and kindergarteners are 31% more likely to achieve literacy proficiency. Furthermore, increasing this incentive is a critical tool for school stability, as NBCTs stay in the profession at three times the rate of their peers.

Pursuing National Board Certification was a goal I set during my very first year in the classroom, driven by a desire to constantly refine my practice and be the best possible teacher for my students. I am proud to be certified as an Exceptional Needs Specialist, with a career focused on supporting students with disabilities. This commitment to being a reflective practitioner is what eventually led me to my current role, where I can now support other educators in reaching this same level of excellence.

While my primary support is for the core mission of this bill, my current role also gives me a unique perspective on its potential. I loved being a teacher, and it was that passion for the profession that compelled me to continue my work within our Hawai'i public schools through the role of an instructional leader and mentor. I utilize my certification daily to coach our teachers toward their own certification—supporting four teachers currently, one of whom recently passed.

As a further consideration to strengthen the bill's impact, I respectfully ask the committee to consider one final addition: **allowing NBCT-certified educators who move into administrative roles to retain their certification bonus**. Currently, I am receiving nearly the same compensation as I did when I was a 12-month teacher because I lost my bonus upon moving into leadership, despite an increased workload and extended hours. Ensuring our most accomplished educators can lead and scale their expertise across an entire school without losing recognition for their certification would be a valuable additional step toward long-term system stability.

I urge you to support HB 1893 and its investment in the excellence of Hawai'i's educators. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Lastly, I am grateful for your dedication and for the heart you put into your service as our legislators to make Hawai'i a better place for all of us.

Sincerely,



Jade Pham Wall, MEdT  
Vice Principal, Ala Wai Elementary School  
National Board Certified Teacher; National Milken Educator  
PhD Student, Exceptionalities in Education

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:40:29 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jamie Kubo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A cohort of teachers at my school drew me to pursue National Board Certification to push us to reach the highest level of certification. All of us grew as professionals in reflecting on lessons and support of our students as well as our colleagues. Having so many National Board teachers at our school helps show our transient military population the high standards we set for our students. Many come with the false pretenses that our schools are behind. We're able to show how highly qualified our teachers are! We would like to encourage more of our colleagues to pursue this and it would be amazing to get paid for being highly qualified and the top of our profession!

Mahalo!

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:41:55 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Casey Kaaukai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**My name is Casey Kaaukai,, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Kula Elementary, Maui, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**I chose to pursue my National Boards to further my education as well as advance my pay. In Hawaii, the cost of living is high and the pay does not meet that standard of living. National Boards is one way I could help to raise my pay. Our pay currently is tied to what is negotiated in our contract, This is one thing I had power to control after I had already moved to the highest class. If I wanted to see any pay increase, I needed to do this rather than wait for a negotiated raise.**

**In this challenge, I grew as an educator. I learned to be more evaluative and see how I could better educate the students and better myself as a teacher. It has exposed me to other methods of teaching that the children can benefit from. They thrive through these methods and their scores attest to it. The students have grown in reading the last years and this is an important part of every child's education. It opens their imagination and allows them to explore so many other aspects in life. In the younger years, it builds such an important foundation.**

**The students I teach now I hope will come back to our community and be the leaders one day. This is the school I attended when I was growing up and the teachers at that time made an impact on me. If I can make half the impact they made on me, then I feel I am doing my part as a teacher. Increasing the National board pay will help the teachers that want to teach and have a passion for teaching to continue to teach and not leave because the pay is better elsewhere. The struggle with conditions now in the classrooms may be worth it if the pay increased and we were valued as much as we put into our education and methods.**

**Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning**

**Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

**HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i’s incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.**

**Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.**

**Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Casey Kaaukai**

## HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Michele Murakami, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Holomua Elementary School, Leeward District, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I first applied for this Certification in 2012 while teaching at Holomua Elementary School. At that time, I was teaching second grade. I was looking for a way to improve my teaching. My students' needs were changing, and I also needed to find a way to improve my teaching to help them continue becoming successful learners. As a result, I pursued the National Board Certification. I have renewed my certification once before and am now completing it again. The rigorous expectation allows me to grow as an educator. As I expect my students to apply their knowledge, I, as their teacher/role model, must do the same. Though I switched positions, I still utilize the skills. All of my students, regardless of whether they are general education, English Learners, or Special Education students, benefit from my obtaining this certification. The additional monetary bonus allows me to focus fully on my work at school without the distraction of seeking additional financial support for my family. I carefully considered whether to renew my certification, and ultimately chose to do so because I see a strong need among my students. While many of them are thriving, a small group continues to face significant challenges. By participating in the certification renewal process myself, I have an opportunity to model for my students that I am a learner just like them. Learning is an ongoing process, and I strive to demonstrate that growth and perseverance are important at every stage.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced an 80 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 aligns Hawai'i's educator incentives with those offered by other leading states, helping ensure the state remains competitive in attracting and retaining highly qualified educators and supporting student success. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their

peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Michele Murakami

EL Coordinator

Holomua Elementary School

Leeward District

michele.murakami@k12.hi.us

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:55:28 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Abigail McClellan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 1893.

I chose to pursue National Board Certification because I wanted to become a better teacher for my students, my school, and my community. I entered the process seeking growth, deeper pedagogical knowledge, stronger instructional decision-making, and a more reflective, research-based approach to teaching.

The process transformed my practice.

Through National Board Certification, I gained confidence grounded in evidence. I developed a stronger foundation in instructional design, formative assessment, and differentiation. I became more intentional in not just what I teach, but in how and why I teach it. I learned to analyze student work more precisely and adjust instruction responsively.

The impact extends beyond my classroom. The process has helped me grow as a leader in my school. I now contribute more confidently to instructional conversations, mentor colleagues, and navigate complex situations with professionalism and clarity. It has deepened my love for teaching, especially here in Hawai‘i, and strengthened my commitment to remain in the Department of Education long-term.

However, the reality is that Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs and have seen dramatic results. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i’s incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and in educators who commit to staying in the classroom. While the current \$5,000 differential acknowledges the work, a \$10,000 incentive would meaningfully reflect both the rigor of certification and the high cost of living in Hawai‘i. It would strengthen retention and encourage more teachers to pursue this transformative process.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers (a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs).

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. National Board Certification strengthens teachers, strengthens schools, and strengthens communities. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable.

I respectfully urge this committee to advance this measure.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:58:38 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
haley van noord	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Haley van Noord and I am a teacher at Lahaina Intermediate School, currently Nationally Board Certified. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893, which would double the annual bonus for National Board Certified Teachers and extend program eligibility to public charter school teachers.

I was motivated to begin the certification process as I had colleagues encourage me and I wanted to grow in my role as a science teacher.

Board certification requires teachers to analyze their own instruction, document evidence of student growth, and reflect systematically on their practice. It is the most demanding and meaningful professional development I have experienced in my career.

Hawai‘i has taken important steps to support this work, including reimbursing certification fees — and I am grateful for that foundation. HB 1893 builds on it. Doubling the annual bonus from \$5,000 to \$10,000 makes Hawai‘i competitive again. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually and have seen a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification as a result. Hawai‘i should do everything it can to compete for the nation’s best educator workforce.

The research on National Board Certification is clear. Students taught by NBCTs gain one to two months of additional learning in a single school year. NBCTs stay in the profession at three times the rate of their peers, providing the stability and expertise that Hawai‘i's schools urgently need.

Including charter school teachers in this program is the right thing to do as well. Charter school students are Hawai‘i's students. They deserve access to accomplished teachers just as public school students do.

Mahalo for your time and your commitment to Hawai‘i's students.

Haley van Noord

Lahaina Intermediate

## HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Matthew Moustakas, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Kealakehe Intermediate, Hawai'i district, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I was drawn to the National Board Certification because I wanted to improve my teaching practice. I have been teaching special education for nine years. I have always wanted to break the cycle of learning stagnancy for my special education students. I wanted to create a learning program that could effectively meet the needs of my students. That is where the National Board certification comes in. The process allowed me to reflect and refine my teaching practice and program. There have already been results. For example, I had a student who entered sixth grade at the Kindergarten reading level and has now improved so dramatically to be now testing at the 5th-grade level as an 8th-grader. For him, this was life-changing and has dramatically changed his attitude and performance at school. This is not an isolated incident, and many more stories can be shared.

If it weren't for the skills and development of my teaching practice, the student successes would not have been possible. This is why I strongly urge you to pass HB 1893 because becoming Nationally Board-certified will help all educators improve their teaching practices and ultimately improve student outcomes.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Matthew Moustakas

Special Education Department Chair, Kealakehe Intermediate, Hawai'i,  
[matthew.Moustakas@k12.hi.us](mailto:matthew.Moustakas@k12.hi.us)

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:08:51 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryan silver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

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

**My name is Bryan Silver, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Kalani High School, Honolulu, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**National Board Certification appealed to me because I wanted a disciplined way to prove, refine, and defend what great teaching looks like in a real Hawai‘i public school engineering classroom, not in theory. The process pushed me to tighten learning targets, use evidence more intentionally, and design reflection cycles that match how engineers iterate, which immediately improved how my students plan, test, fail forward, and communicate. I still remember watching a quiet ninth grader who used to hide behind louder teammates lead a design review with clear data and calm confidence by her Junior year, because I had learned to structure feedback, roles, and checkpoints with far more purpose through self reflection provided in a structured setting and evaluated by external parties to push my own understanding of the profession and content.**

**Board Certification also expanded my commitment to stay and lead, it validated that this work is a career-long craft and it gave me the credibility to build programs that reach beyond my room into statewide robotics events and mentorship. My students gained more than technical skills like CAD, fabrication, and programming; they gained identity as problem-solvers who can represent Kalani and Hawai‘i with pride, professionalism, and real-world readiness as we compete on National and World platforms representing the top 15% of teams.**

**As a teacher-leader, I make a point to guide colleagues through the demanding process of National Board Certification because it can feel overwhelming when you try to do it alone. The reflection and documentation are intense, and having a coach or a trusted peer to help plan, teach, and debrief lessons is often the difference between simply surviving and actually growing. The cost is also a real barrier, candidates pay out of pocket, and many of us do not certify on the first attempt. In my case, I invested more than \$4,000 and three years to earn certification, which is exactly why I believe support matters. That journey strengthened the same habits we teach students every day, goal setting, persistence, and**

**continuous improvement, and it made me a better educator and a stronger advocate for others.**

**Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

**HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.**

**Bryan Silver**

**Kalani High School**

**Engineering Teacher**

**2025 Hawai'i State Teacher of the Year**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:18:36 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shelley Roberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Shelley Roberg, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher and elementary special education teacher in Hawai'i. I pursued National Board Certification because I wanted a deeper, research-based framework for meeting the needs of diverse learners, especially students with disabilities and multilingual backgrounds. The process transformed my teaching by pushing me to analyze student work more closely, design instruction around individual strengths and interests, and reflect systematically on my impact. Because of this, I was able to move into charter and project-based learning settings where inclusion is truly lived out, and I now witness daily gains as students engage in meaningful, rigorous tasks tailored to their goals. Board certification also encouraged me to stay in the profession and step into leadership roles like supporting colleagues, mentoring new teachers, and advocating for equitable practices that benefit all students in Hawai'i. National Board is also one of the only certificates that will transfer with my university credits when I move states. The National Board experience was more difficult and meaningful than any of the professional development opportunities that I have experienced thus far.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB 1893 HD1 and continue investing in National Board Certified Teachers for Hawai'i's schools.

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:19:53 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie Holtvedt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is **Jamie Holtvedt**, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at **Makawao Elementary School, Maui**, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I am currently pursuing my Maintenance of Certification (MOC) for the second time. This process requires hundreds of hours of planning, teaching, and deep reflection to ensure my students—particularly my **English Learners (EL)** and students with **IEPs**—receive the high-quality, **inclusive instruction** they deserve.

National Board Certification has transformed my practice, allowing me to better differentiate for my most vulnerable learners. However, given the high **cost of living** in Hawai‘i, the current incentive does not fully reflect the professional labor and expertise required to maintain this credential. Increasing this bonus is a vital step in retaining experienced, highly-qualified teachers who are committed to equity in our classrooms.

Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive, but states like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually. HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i back in line with these leaders, offering a \$10,000 annual bonus and an additional \$5,000 for those in high-need schools. Research shows students taught by NBCTs gain one to two months of additional learning per year.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is also vital, as these students deserve equal access to accomplished educators. I respectfully urge this committee to advance HB 1893.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**Jamie Holtvedt, 3rd grade teacher, Makawao Elementary School, Maui, Hawaii,  
10003182@k12.hi.us**

2/2/26

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

My name is John Crommelin, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Ha‘aheo Elementary, Hilo/Waikea Complex, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

As a National Board Certified Teacher, I can say it is the most important decision I’ve made in my teaching career. The following excerpt from my portfolio explains my NBCT journey:

My National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) journey began with extreme reluctance. At this point in my career, I was unable to move up any salary classes, so there was little incentive to pay for professional development credit courses. The final professional accomplishment available to me as a classroom educator in Hawai‘i was National Board Certification. I knew more teachers who had attempted and failed than those who had passed, making the process intimidating, and the upfront out-of-pocket cost was not an investment I was eager to make. During the 2023 school year, my school’s population declined from 185 students to 115, and more than half of our staff turned over within two years. We were on our third principal that year, and school morale was at rock bottom. I was juggling a caseload of 14 students while preparing for a potential due process case that seemed to consume every minute of my life. I was soul-searching at this point and questioning the teaching profession.

Little did I know that attending a professional development workshop called SMILE that January would reignite my passion for education. The training was designed and delivered by my complex area’s District Education Specialist (DES)—a UH Mānoa graduate with a doctorate in special education. Her erudition, passion, and confidence reignited my love of learning and motivated me to pursue National Board Certification. Within two weeks of the training, I registered for all four components of the Exceptional Needs Specialist certification. The process was incredibly challenging, but in December 2024, I received passing scores. Only 30% of candidates who attempt all four components pass on their first try. I attribute my success to excellent leadership, which was cultivated through the University of Hawai‘i system.

My students have greatly benefited from my NBCT journey, and our broader school community has as well. The process has made me more reflective and intentional in my teaching practices. It pushed me to step outside of my comfort zone and develop new instructional strategies, as well as more effective methods of data collection and analysis.

In addition to continuing my work in the classroom, I am applying to a doctoral program at UH Mānoa. The differential pay I receive will help support my tuition, allowing me to further my education and, in turn, reinvest that knowledge and growth back into our community.

Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

2/2/26

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

John Crommelin  
NBCT Exceptional Needs Specialist  
Ha'aheo Elementary/Hilo Waiakea Complex  
John.Crommelin@k12.hi.us

## **HB 1893** — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

I am writing in support of HB 1893 HD1. I teach at 'Aiea High School and have been nationally certified since 2013. Our school is a Title I school, where approximately fifty percent of our student population receives free or reduced lunches. It would be tremendously beneficial for our population to be taught by teachers who successfully complete the journey of National Board Certification. We used to have a certified teacher in each core content area, but currently only have two at our school, and that's because a teacher certified last year. Raising the compensation to \$10,000 would serve as an incentive for some of our other teachers to complete the professional learning.

I am a strong advocate for the most needy in our community and feel becoming certified helped me grow into a better teacher. I taught science and was successful in helping students gain confidence in the content, become professionals (healthcare, law, business, law enforcement, education, etc.), and even convinced some to go to college when they did not think it was within their realm of possibility. NBCTs believe in equity and use education as a tool to offer students with high needs a brighter future.

Being nationally certified encouraged me to take on further challenges. I've served as a department chair, club advisor, class advisor, mentor teacher, academic coach, and curriculum coordinator. When I was in the classroom, students asked to join my classes. I've had students with individual learning plans (SPED) ask to take my Advanced Placement classes and biology students ask me to teach Calculus because they wanted to attempt it. Convincing students they are capable of learning is half the battle.

Just as advanced placement classes help students become more successful in their undergraduate studies, National Board Certification helps teachers grow professionally, reflect on their lessons, and become more effective in helping students achieve their goals. I strongly believe HB 1893 will increase the number of teachers willing to embark on the path of certification.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts.



Susan Gonsalves, O.D., Curriculum Coordinator

'Aiea High School

susan.gonsalves@k12.hi.us

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:49:21 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelly E. Duell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Kelly E. Duell, MA, NBCT, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Waikoloa School, HKKK District, Hawai‘i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

Pursuing National Board Certification was never about adding letters after my name — it was about becoming the kind of educator my students deserved. Teaching in Hawai‘i, where our classrooms are beautifully diverse and richly multilingual, I wanted to ensure I was meeting every learner with intention, skill, and high expectations. I was drawn to National Board Certification because it asks educators to examine not just what we teach, but how and why we teach it. It requires deep reflection, analysis of student work, and evidence of impact. I wanted to grow beyond being an experienced teacher — I wanted to become a more accomplished one.

The process changed my teaching in profound ways. I became more deliberate in aligning instruction to student need, more analytical about formative assessment, and more reflective about my own practice. Instead of asking, “Did I teach it?” I began asking, “Did they learn it — and how do I know?” My planning became more responsive. I built clearer objectives, embedded structured language supports, and differentiated more intentionally for multilingual learners and students at varying proficiency levels.

One specific moment stands out. In my Mililani classroom, I had a quiet multilingual student who rarely participated in whole-group discussions. Before National Board, I might have encouraged participation but moved on quickly. Through the certification process, I learned to design structured academic talk protocols with sentence frames and intentional peer grouping. After implementing these supports, that same student began contributing confidently in small groups — and eventually volunteered to share during whole-class discussion. His written responses grew in complexity because his oral language had strengthened. That shift wasn’t accidental; it was the result of purposeful instructional design grounded in National Board standards. Watching his confidence grow changed how I viewed the power of intentional scaffolding.

Board certification also influenced my longevity in the profession. The process re-energized me. Teaching can be demanding, and without meaningful growth opportunities, it can feel isolating. National Board Certification reminded me that teaching is a craft — one that can continually be refined. Rather than considering stepping back, I found renewed commitment to staying in the classroom and contributing long-term to our public schools in Hawai‘i.

Beyond my classroom, certification expanded my leadership. I became more confident mentoring colleagues, facilitating professional learning communities, and guiding conversations around student data and instructional strategy. The process gave me a shared language of accomplished practice. When working with fellow educators, I could ground discussions in standards, equity, and evidence of student impact. Leadership no longer meant stepping out of the classroom; it meant strengthening the profession from within it.

Most importantly, my students gained more than academic content. They gained access. They gained structured opportunities to think critically, speak confidently, and see themselves as capable learners. I saw unexpected growth not only from high-performing students, but from those who previously hesitated to engage. Students developed stronger academic language, deeper analytical thinking, and greater ownership of their learning. Some who once identified themselves as “bad at school” began seeing themselves as scholars.

National Board Certification didn’t just validate my teaching — it transformed it. And in doing so, it strengthened the learning experiences of the students in my community. That local impact — in our Mililani classrooms, with our Hawai‘i students — is the lasting legacy of the process.

Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i’s incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kelly E. Duell, MA, NBCT, Educator, Waikoloa School HKKK District

Kelly.duell@K12.hi.us

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:00:32 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Margeaux Ra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program  
Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Margeaux Ra, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Helemano School, Central District, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1 and urge this committee to pass it.

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**My Story**

Pursuing National Board Certification began as a personal quest to deepen my craft. The rigorous standards forced me to reflect on every lesson, refine my assessment practices, and adopt evidence-based strategies that I had previously only skimmed. As a result, my classroom became a more focused learning environment where students consistently achieved higher growth.

Beyond my own classroom, the certification journey positioned me as a resource for colleagues. Seeing my peers adopt these practices—and watching their students thrive—has been one of the most rewarding outcomes of my certification.

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**Why HB 1893 Is Critical for Hawai‘i**

- **Competitive Incentives:** States such as Maryland now offer \$10,000 (plus additional bonuses for high-need schools) to attract and retain NBCTs, resulting in a 980 % surge in new certifications. Hawai‘i’s current incentives lag behind, limiting our ability to draw and keep top talent.
- **Student Impact:** Research shows that students taught by NBCTs gain one to two months of additional learning each year. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 % more likely to achieve literacy proficiency.
- **Teacher Retention:** NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of non-certified peers, providing much-needed stability for districts across the state.

- Supporting All Public Schools: Extending the bonus to charter-school teachers ensures that every student—whether in a traditional public school or a charter—has access to highly qualified educators.
- 

## **Closing**

Every student in Hawai‘i deserves instruction from a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and a commitment to continuous growth. By restoring Hawai‘i’s incentive to align with leading states—\$10,000 annually for NBCTs and an additional \$5,000 for those serving high-need schools—we invest directly in the quality of teaching, the professional development of our educators, and the long-term success of our students.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I respectfully urge the committee to advance HB 1893.

Mahalo,

Margeaux Ra | Grade 5 Teacher | Helemano School, Central District |  
margeaux.ikuma@gmail.com

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:06:10 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
HOLLAND HENDERSON	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello, I am writing in support of HB1893. As a career teacher, I could not support my family without this bonus (I have received an additional \$5,000 because of my school's criteria). The cost of living is so high in Hawaii, and after our contract expires we are looking at stagnant income for a while. This bonus makes it possible to continue in the DOE, a job I love, and pay increasing grocery and utility bills.

NBCTs offer professional support and expertise on so many areas of teaching, and I believe that we contribute beyond the classroom. Please pass this Bill to keep us where we belong-- in public schools!

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:12:39 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelli Lim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1893, which proposes to increase the annual incentive for National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

I have been a teacher in Hawai'i for 11 years and have maintained my National Board Certification for 4 years. While I am deeply committed to my students and the profession, I must be candid: I am currently considering leaving the teaching profession.

The reality of teaching in Hawai'i has become increasingly difficult. We are facing:

- Stagnant wages relative to the rapidly rising cost of living in our islands.
- Increasingly complex classroom demands that require the high-level expertise that NBCTs provide.
- Burnout among veteran educators who feel the financial strain of staying in a profession that does not always reflect their level of expertise in their paycheck.

Raising this incentive to \$10,000 is more than just a "bonus"—it is a critical retention tool. For an educator like myself, this increase would provide the necessary financial stability to justify staying in the classroom rather than seeking a career change.

National Board Certification is a rigorous, multi-year process that proves a teacher's impact on student learning. By passing this bill, you are sending a clear message that Hawai'i values its most highly skilled educators and is serious about solving the teacher retention crisis.

I urge you to pass HB1893 to help keep experienced, board-certified teachers in our schools where our keiki need us most.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully, Kelli Lim

**Date:** 03/02/2026

**Time:** 2:00 PM

**Location:** 308

**Committee:** FIN

**Person Testifying:** Derek Minakami, NBCT  
**Title of Bill:** HB1893 RELATING TO EDUCATION

**Position:** SUPPORT

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Members of the Committee

As Hawai'i's first public school National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) and principal who maintains his NBCT status, I strongly support this bill for the following reasons:

No other professional development experienced sharpened my teaching practice and prompted innovation than the National Board Certification process. It took dozens of hours to prepare, videotape myself teaching, collecting student work, gathering other articles of evidence showing how I engage parents and collaborate with other teachers, and reflecting upon my results. And in the end, I better discerned where I stood in relation to national standards for teaching and, more importantly, how I could improve.

When teachers go through the National Board Certification process, even if they are not successful, their students are the ultimate beneficiaries. In attaining a clear understanding of what is expected and how one might do better, teachers are empowered to reach those targets. But it does take dedication, focus, and assiduousness which should be rewarded.

For the first four years since attaining National Board Certification, no bonus or incentive was provided. As result, very few teachers attempted the arduous process. But after 2004, when the \$5000 bonus was implemented, a wave of teachers began their journey towards becoming an NBCT. Today there are 539 NBCTs in Hawai'i, a fraction of the 13,000 public school teachers in the DOE. Certainly, many like myself are at retirement age. So to ensure newer teachers are incentivized to strive for certification, it is time to raise the bonus. Twenty-two years later, the bonus has not changed despite inflation and higher home prices. As I result, I urge the legislature to pass this bill so that we can continue entice teachers to undergo this rigorous, reflective process of improvement and enhance our classrooms across the state.

Mahalo for your consideration of this testimony.

Further should the task of evaluating principals fall upon the School Community Council (SCC), there would be an inherent conflict of interest since teachers and classified employees are members of the SCC. Whether influenced by a fear of retaliation or motivated by a personal grievance, subordinates have a difficult time impartially evaluating their supervisors. In the end, this subverts the goal of using the evaluation results for professional development and diminishes trust in the authenticity of the evaluations.

Mahalo for your consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Alex Obra, Waiāhole Elementary School	Kathy Kahikina, Pū'ōhala Elementary School
Bernadette Tyrel, Castle High School	Keala Ili, Kahalu'u Elementary School
Danny Garcia, He'eia Elementary School	Kimi Ikeda, Ahuimanu Elementary School
Derek Minakami, Kāne'ohe Elementary School	Loha Kaka, Lā'ie Elementary School
Elissa Johnson, Rev. Benjamin Parker Elementary School	Ryan Micale, King Intermediate School
Eliza Elkington, Sunset Beach Elementary School	U'i Kaitoku, Hau'ula Elementary School
Ikaika Plunkett, Kahuku Elementary School	Walter Santiago, Kahuku High and Intermediate School
Jennifer Luke Payne, Ka'a'awa Elementary School	Wess Unten, Kapunahala Elementary School

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:26:42 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Scott Oberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a National Board Certified Teacher for the last 15 years, I can attest that this was by far the best professional development in my 25 year career in the Hawaii DOE. The self reflection that took place during this process made me a better teacher and mentor to my colleagues. The money put towards this bill will pay itself back with the quality of teachers that may enter the National Board certification. Look at the amount of openings at the beginning of every school year and it will show that any reason to recruit and retain teachers in our state will be a great investment.

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:37:46 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jenna Nitahara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**My name is Jenna Nitahara, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Ewa Makai Middle School, Leeward District, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**As a National Board Certified Teacher for over 15 years, I initially was drawn to this by the \$10,000 incentive we got when I first certified. As a young teacher, this money was invaluable as it not only supplemented my small income, but it allowed me to stay in a profession I loved rather than choosing something more lucrative. I continue to recertify and pay the \$500 in hopes that the incentive will again be \$10,000 so it can continue to supplement income and now also support my family. I love teaching, but the salary is not enough to survive comfortably in Hawaii.**

**In addition to the financial incentive, having teachers who truly care about their profession enough to pursue this certification is invaluable to our students. Not only does it show that we went the extra mile to get it, but it also proves that we are continuing to be lifelong learners and reflect upon our profession. Students win when they have highly qualified teachers who are always striving to be better.**

**Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

**HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i’s incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared**

**to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.**

**Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.**

**Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

Jenna Nitahara

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:53:14 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Kato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Jessica Kato, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Campbell High School in Ewa Beach, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893. National Board Certification is, without question, the most transformative professional development I have ever experienced. The bonus has kept me in the classroom, teaching, instead of moving on to higher paying administrative jobs.

Unlike traditional professional development, this process requires a rigorous, peer-reviewed demonstration of impact on student learning. It forced me to analyze my practice in a deep and detailed way, ensuring that every lesson is purposeful and every student is reached. It doesn't just verify that we are good teachers; it makes us better teachers.

While the current \$5,000 bonus was a visionary investment when it was first established, it has remained completely stagnant despite years of rising inflation and cost-of-living increases. The purchasing power of \$5,000 today is significantly less than it was at the program's inception. As general teacher salaries have (rightfully) seen incremental increases, the NBCT bonus has not kept pace, effectively diminishing the relative value of this elite certification.

Increasing the stipend to \$10,000 serves three critical purposes:

1. **Recruitment:** It provides a powerful incentive for our best and brightest educators to undergo the hundreds of hours of work required to achieve certification.
2. **Retention:** It encourages our most effective "master teachers" to stay in the classroom where they are needed most, rather than moving into administration for higher pay.
3. **Respect:** It is a tangible way for the state to signal respect for professional expertise. We recognize excellence in other fields with significant compensation; our nationally recognized educators deserve the same.

By increasing this stipend, you are not just giving a bonus; you are investing in a proven pipeline of classroom excellence that directly benefits our students. It is time our compensation reflects the high standards we ask our teachers to meet.

I urge you to support this increase and show our educators that their pursuit of mastery is valued by this state.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jessica Kato, NBCT, MEd

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:55:50 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amanda Shim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Amanda Shim, and I am writing to express my strong support for an increase in the stipend for teachers who are National Board Certified. As an educator with over 20 years of classroom experience, I have dedicated my career to serving students and families in Hawai‘i. I am proud of that commitment, and I am also deeply concerned that our compensation system does not reflect the level of expertise, responsibility, and long-term service required of today’s teachers.

National Board Certification is one of the most rigorous professional accomplishments in education. It is not a one-time workshop or a simple credential. It demands sustained reflection, evidence of impact on student learning, careful analysis of teaching practice, and a demonstrated commitment to continuous improvement. Teachers who pursue and earn this certification invest countless hours, often outside of contract time, collecting artifacts, analyzing data, filming instruction, writing detailed reflections, and aligning practice to high professional standards. The process strengthens instruction, benefits students directly, and elevates the profession as a whole.

For many Hawai‘i educators, National Board Certification has also become one of the only realistic pathways to earn closer to a livable, competitive salary. After two decades of service, it should not feel necessary to take on an additional, demanding certification simply to approach what teachers in other states can earn with routine step increases and more consistent raises. In Hawai‘i, many of us do not experience pay growth that keeps pace with rising costs of living. As a result, pursuing National Board Certification is often less about recognition and more about survival, an attempt to close the gap between what our work is worth and what we are actually paid.

That is not the message we should be sending to our educators.

Increasing the National Board Certified teacher stipend would do three critical things:

1. Recognize excellence and proven impact by rewarding educators who meet an advanced, nationally respected standard.
2. Strengthen retention by making it more feasible for experienced, highly skilled teachers to remain in Hawai‘i classrooms rather than leaving for higher-paying states or other careers.

3. Encourage professional growth by signaling that Hawai'i values continuous improvement, reflective practice, and measurable student-centered outcomes.

If we want to keep strong teachers in Hawai'i and attract more to stay and build their careers here, we must create compensation structures that reflect both experience and advanced professional accomplishment. Teachers should not have to pursue rigorous additional credentials simply to earn a salary that is more standard elsewhere. At the same time, teachers who do pursue National Board Certification should be meaningfully rewarded for the extraordinary effort it requires and the high-quality teaching it represents.

Thank you for your consideration and for the work you do to support Hawai'i's students and educators. I urge you to approve an increase in the stipend for National Board Certified teachers as an investment in instructional excellence, teacher retention, and the long-term success of our public education system.

Sincerely,  
Amanda Shim

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:16:09 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rick Yamashiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:26:44 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jon Fia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in **strong support** of HB1893. NBCT currently pays 5000.00 for those educators who take on the arduous task of completing the National Boards requirements. Increasing it to 10,000.00 sends the message that their sacrifice is valued. This affirms that those educators have reached master status. This incentivizes teachers to stretch outside of their comfort zone to improve their skills. However, the current incentive of 5,000.00 is not as valuable as it was nearly 20 years ago when it first was implemented. Today, a teacher would literally make more money working at McDonalds than what the National Boards pay. The amount of time going into planning and executing the National Boards application/portfolio process is staggering.

It is no secret that Hawaii is struggling to fill vacancies and it will become even more dire as a large portion of the teachers are now of retirement age. Allowing HB1893 to pass would keep those senior teachers in the DOE longer to see through their NBCT.

This bill has been long overdue and I kindly ask for your support.

Thank you.

## HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Gina Hyun, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Niu Valley Middle School, Farrington-Kaiser-Kalani District, O'ahu, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I pursued National Board Certification in the spring of 2024 and received my certification in the winter of 2025. It was one of the most rigorous challenges I have ever undertaken, yet ultimately one of the most rewarding certifications I have received. The process validated the strategies I was already implementing while challenging me to refine my practices to better support my students.

Through this journey, I learned to engage parents more deeply, align my instruction with my school's academic plan, and critically reflect on my daily teaching. My students began engaging in richer mathematical discourse and took ownership of their learning through differentiated paths. The results spoke for themselves: my students improved by an entire proficiency level on their year-end standardized tests, and those in my inclusion classes performed on par with their general education peers.

I teach because I love my students and believe every child deserves a high-quality, free education. This will always be my philosophy. Every child has a story and deserves an exceptional teacher; I aspire every day to be that teacher for them.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Gina Hyun | 8th Grade Mathematics |  
Niu Valley Middle School, FKK District, Oahu | [ghyun564@gmail.com](mailto:ghyun564@gmail.com)

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:32:15 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janice Avellana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB 1893. As of this writing, I have been a teacher in Hawaii’s Public School System for 20 plus years. I hold a Bachelor’s Degree in Fine Arts, as well as a Master’s Degree of Education in Teaching (MEdT). Despite those achievements, it wasn’t until 4 years ago—when I became a National Board Certified Teacher—that I made the actual commitment to stay in this profession. The NBCT process helped me feel positive about staying in this profession that is often looked down upon, and made me proud to join the ranks of many other highly qualified teachers. Upon completion of my National Board Certification, I finally decided I would finish out my profession and retire as a public school teacher with the Hawaii State Department of Education. Not only did the process help me find a community of reflective teacher leaders that shared my ambition and drive to sharpen my teaching skills, but also finally compensated me financially, to bring me closer to a pay level that matches my level of education and experience. As a Hawaii National Board Certified Teacher, I would welcome fairer financial compensation in the form of a higher yearly NBCT bonus. This would be one significant step towards rewarding highly qualified teachers with advanced teaching licenses and give them incentive to commit their professional lives to teaching, adding dignity to their chosen life’s work and tangible means for them to support themselves and their families.

## HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Leanne Dunn and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Makawao Elementary on Maui. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

The National Board Certification process was extremely challenging professionally and personally. It was more difficult than my M.Ed process through UH Hilo. I began learning about the process in 2019, first attempted certification in school year 2022-2023, re-attempted certification in school year 2024-2025 and saw those amazing fireworks on my screen for certification in December 2024!

Throughout my National Board certification process ( I certified in Literacy) I learned to evaluate exactly why I teach the way I do and to question what I could do to meet the needs of my students in a detailed and comprehensive manner. It was unlike any other professional development, training or course and I became a stronger teacher through studying literacy acquisition in a specific way individualized for each student.

A example of how I evolved in my teaching practice through the National Board process is I began to create a series of place based assessments (such as on the uses of niu) that were applicable to students' lives. I also created assessments on the interactive learning platform SeeSaw where students could use multiple modalities to demonstrate their learning. As I have taught 1st grade for 13+ years I have seen how literacy acquisition can be a challenge for diverse learners.

Through making place based reading assessments ( many focused on food which they loved ) that involved multiple modalities students were more engaged and showed excitement for demonstrating what they were learning. Additionally many of my students come from Native Hawaiian lineage ( at that time about 30% of the school population). All of my students loved completing literacy activities with familiar foods, animals and subject matter rather than from a text written about snow and squirrels that they had no personal connection to. It was important for my literacy teaching practice to help students see that their familiar subject matter is dynamic and they were excited to help me think of more literacy assessments to create.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students. Thinking about how prices have gone up for things such as groceries, the \$5,000 annual stipend equates to about \$130 per paycheck for me. Even though it helps, \$130 cannot even pay my groceries for 2 weeks.

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Leanne Dunn

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:43:40 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sarah Kern	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of this measure.

Aloha,

My name is Kat Sampson and I am a ninth year public school teacher who earned a National Board Certification in Early Adolescence Mathematics this past December. I am happily employed by SEEQS Public Charter School and plan to continue teaching mathematics and sustainability courses at SEEQS for the foreseeable future. I believe that the legislature should pass HB 1893 in an effort to double the annual statewide National Board bonus in Hawai'i from \$5,000 to \$10,000 — and extend eligibility to charter school teachers for the first time.

Two years ago when I began my National Board journey, I learned that Hawai'i charter schools were not required to budget National Board bonuses into their annual budget and that if you wanted the incentive you had to ask your school's executive director directly. Before I began my journey, I asked the executive director at the time if they would be willing to honor and match the Department of Education's bonus. They said yes. Fast forward two years, I had earned the certification and SEEQS had a new executive director. I worried that with a new leader, they might not honor the same conversation. Not to mention, I had to ask mid-year (December) for the bonus to be honored. The conversation was risky and I felt the pressure of the power dynamic. I worried that maybe the money had already been allocated somewhere else. But I also felt proud of my work and wanted to be acknowledged in the same way as my DOE peers across the state.

Luckily the current ED honored both the \$5000 bonus and additional \$5000 for high turnover school. Unfortunately there was not a current system set up for SEEQS teachers to apply for and receive the bonus. The ED had to create, with the help of our Director of HR, a formal process through which the bonus could be acquired. Again I am grateful because the ED and Director of HR moved quickly and I was paid bonus payments within two months of requesting.

Below I have written additional reasons why this bill should be passed.

### **Reasons for Charter School Eligibility**

- Increase competition across schools
- Increase competition across states (brain drain)
- Protect charter school teachers against system-wide inconsistencies
- Protect charter school teachers from the undue burden of negotiating with their employer
- Protect charter school teachers from losing a stipend from year to year if budgets change
- Relieve charter boards and executive directors from figuring out how and when to budget for stipends and how to build appropriate systems with minimal guidance
- Not codifying this benefit for charter school teachers may incentivize charter school teachers NOT to earn the certification as they may not feel comfortable asking for the money.
- Not codifying this benefit for charter school teachers may incentivize traditional public school teachers NOT to earn the certification as they may be interested in moving to a charter school but worry their cert won't be acknowledged.

### **Reasons for an increase bonus to \$10,000**

- Currently the DOE provides an additional \$5,000 to teachers who work at "high turnover schools," which they define as schools who retain less than 80% of their teachers from year to year. I'm assuming that most public schools and public charter schools struggle to meet this metric annually. If a majority of DOE NB-certified teachers already qualify for the additional \$5,000, I recommend the state extend to all teachers.
- If a teacher who works at a high-turnover school currently makes a \$10,000 bonus has to move to another school for any litany of reasons (e.g. moving in with elder, change in child's education, better opportunities,) it's important that they don't have to take a \$5,000 pay cut if they happen to move to a school that's not considered high turnover.

### **Comments from a current public charter school executive director**

- They acknowledge inconsistencies across their charter ED network when it comes to each charter honoring the DOE's bonus. They say this makes the greater public charter system less competitive when it comes to

teacher talent. According to the DOE, about 8% of students attending public schools in Hawai'i are educated in charter schools. It's important that that percentage of students all gets served by National Board Certified teachers.

- They said they had to create their own system within their own charter to honor the National Board Process. This took time and energy that could have been saved if they were able to operate under the same process as all DOE schools. If an ED has to do extra work to design a bonus pay system, there's a chance they might not do it. And teachers and students lose out because of it.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kat Sampson

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:57:09 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carolyn Kirio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Carolyn Kirio, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Governor W. R. Farrington High School, Honolulu, Hawai‘i and a Professional Learning Facilitator for Hawaii candidates pursuing the National Board Process. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I have been Nationally Certified since 2002 and one of the first in my field to obtain the recognition. Since this time I have maintained my credentials by undergoing a rigorous recertification process three times. Each time I pursued National Board Certification, I committed to a comprehensive, evidence-based process that required me to:

- Analyze my own teaching through video recordings and student work samples
- Engage in deep, subject-matter expertise by revisiting content at a scholarly level
- Reflect on equity and access for every learner in my classroom
- Collaborate with colleagues in ways that broke down classroom isolation

This wasn't a box to check. It was a transformative professional experience that has continuously made me a fundamentally better teacher. The result? My students showed measurable growth. I became more intentional about differentiation, more responsive to individual learning needs, and more confident in my instructional decisions. My classroom shifted from "teaching content" to "ensuring student learning."

Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need

schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Carolyn H. Kirio

Carolyn H. Kirio, PhD, MLISc, PD, BEd

NBCT Librarian

Governor W. R. Farrington High

Honolulu District

carolyn.kirio@k12.hi.us

Testimony

## HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Darrah Brown, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher candidate at Niu Valley Middle School in the Honolulu District on Oahu in the state of Hawaii. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

Even after two decades of teaching, I believe we are always a work in progress. Pursuing National Board Certification allowed me to "humble my practice," specifically in how I teach science to neurodivergent learners. By upping my parent communication and focusing on the social-emotional needs of my students, I've seen a shift in classroom culture—one student even noted how much they appreciated seeing me "reflecting" just like them.

The NBCT process also gave me the courage to establish a cross-grade Gardening Club that integrates Hawaiian culture and high school mentorship. This certification is the reason I will be staying in the profession for the next five-plus years. State compensation validates this rigorous growth and ensures veteran teachers like myself continue to lead with confidence.

Hawaii's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawaii has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawaii's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawaii district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Darrah Brown

Science Teacher, Niu Valley Middle School

Honolulu District

Email: [Darrah.Brown@k12.hi.us](mailto:Darrah.Brown@k12.hi.us)

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 11:14:34 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eleyne Fia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

**Dear Honorable Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:**

**My name is Eleyne Fia, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at James Campbell High School, Leeward District, Ewa Beach, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

My own experience: I became a National Board Certified Teacher as a School Counselor. I believe that the very rigorous process of earning the certification, is a unique training which continues to assist me in my position at the high school. James Campbell High School is the largest high school in the state, but with the professional, advanced high quality training, I am able to analyze data, reflect, and identify the diverse needs of our students and families. More so, I am able to coordinate systems that allow me to reach my large clientele and support them as individuals, instead of just a number. Being an NBCT has also instilled in me the confidence to be a leader. For example, I am on the executive board of my professional organization (Hawai‘i Association for College Admission Counseling) to assist other college and career counselors in developing their professional careers, I also served as a past president for the organization. I truly believe that being an NBCT gives educators the confidence to serve in roles beyond their positions, and the huge return cannot be measured. But truly, we need more educators to challenge themselves to become a certified NBCT!

**Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

**HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.**

**Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Eleyne Fia, MEd., NBCT 2013, 2023 (MOC)**

**College and Career School Counselor**

**HACAC Admissions Practices**

**James Campbell High School, Leeward District**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 11:24:03 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shu-Ying Bonner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I am pursuing Board certification because I know it will make me a better teacher. The process is rigorous — it requires teachers to analyze their own instruction, document evidence of student growth, and reflect systematically on their practice. It is the most demanding and meaningful professional development I have experienced.**

**Hawai‘i has taken important steps to support this work, including reimbursing certification fees — and I am grateful for that foundation. HB 1893 builds on it. Doubling the annual bonus from \$5,000 to \$10,000 makes Hawai‘i competitive again. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually and have seen a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification as a result. Hawai‘i should do everything it can to compete for the nation’s best educator workforce.**

**The research on National Board Certification is clear. Students taught by NBCTs gain one to two months of additional learning in a single school year. They are significantly more likely to score proficient on literacy assessments — 31 percent**

**more likely in studies of kindergarteners with NBCT teachers. And NBCTs stay in the profession at three times the rate of their peers, providing the stability and expertise that Hawai‘i’s schools urgently need.**

**Including charter school teachers in this program is the right thing to do as well. Charter school students are Hawai‘i’s students. They deserve access to accomplished teachers just as public school students do.**

**I am in the middle of this journey because I believe in what it produces — for teachers and for students. I urge this committee to advance HB 1893 and help Hawai‘i lead again.**

**Mahalo for your time and your commitment to Hawai‘i’s students.**

## HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Errin Sandobal, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Leihoku Elementary, Leeward District, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I began my National Board Certification journey over 10 years ago in a pursuit to grow as a learner and educator. The process helped me to refine and strengthen my practice to better serve the students in my classroom. Certification also helped me grow as a teacher leader in my school, by sharing my journey with others and encouraging them to pursue the experience.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

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Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Errin Sandobal | Grade 6 Teacher | Leihoku Elementary, Leeward District |  
errin.sandobal@k12.hi.u1

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:02:13 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tai Baird	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this additional incentive amount from 5,000 to 10,000 for teachers who renew their NBCT as this matters for students!! The single most important factor in a child education is the level of education of the person who stands at the front of the classroom! Let's keep our students with educated, powerful teachers and those who keep their craft alive!! Please find the additional money!!

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

My name is Jason Duncan, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Mililani High School, Central District, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

After 5 years of teaching, I pursued my National Board Certification in Social Studies/History in 2014 and can assure you this process was truly transformative as an educator. It solidified my dedication to the profession and being a reflective practitioner. Also, it opened up additional doors as I pursued professional development opportunities such as the James Madison Fellowship. The dedication I have to history and civic education is rooted in my early experiences of pursuing my National Board Certification. Without the support and monetary incentive provided, I'm not sure I would have pursued my National Boards. It really locked me into the teaching profession and provided incentives to stay here in Hawaii. The increase in the incentive would definitely draw more locals into starting and staying in the profession. The past 20 years I've seen too many excellent colleagues come and go. It's time that the Hawaii State Legislature gets more serious about providing more incentives and enter and stay in the profession for the students of Hawaii.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

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Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jason Duncan | Social Studies | Mililani High School, Central District |  
[duncan.civic.education@gmail.com](mailto:duncan.civic.education@gmail.com)

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:08:23 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa A. Padilla	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

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

**My name is Melissa A. Padilla, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) at James Campbell High School, Leeward District, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**I began my National Board Certification journey in 2007, because I saw it as the only opportunity to increase my paycheck. Back then a \$5,000 increase in annual pay due to having NBCT at the end of your name was an incentive when we could no longer depend on step increases via our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).**

**Completing my NBCT process took years, but I gained a stronger understanding that my profession as a classroom teacher is truly a vocation for me. I didn’t earn a passing score my first year, but I learned perseverance because I knew that I could learn from this failure to improve myself as an educator. This “not meeting” the required score also taught me how my students feel when they fall short of something they worked so hard for and they didn’t have their desired outcome. Resiliency and metacognition became part of my vocabulary when I reflected on my teaching practices as well as helping my students who were struggling in their understanding of the content I was teaching.**

**I achieved my National Board Certification for Adolescence/Young Adulthood in English Language Arts in 2009 and renewed my certification in 2019. Because of my NBCT, I pursued teaching outside of my subject area with being qualified to teach AP Art History as well AP Seminar at James Campbell High School. My National Board experience has allowed me to seek working with students in different subject areas to help grow their understanding of language skills, reading comprehension, and expressing themselves in written as well as spoken genres.**

**Although I could retire now, I decided to commit to teaching at least four more years because I’ll be teaching in our school’s AVID program starting with 9th graders in the school year 2026-2027. That being said, I will start the renewal process for my NBCT soon; in order to maintain my NBCT license past my 2029 expiration date.**

**Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

**HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.**

**Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.**

**Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:13:31 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amelia Thorne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**My name is Amelia Thorne; I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Konawaena High School in Kealahou. I strongly encourage this committee to pass HB 1893.**

**Achieving National Board Certification is not simply reflective of a teacher that already has strong instructional practices in place. Over the two years during which I worked towards National Board Certification, I became a better teacher. The process requires reflection, growth, and the integration of best practices. Incentivizing teachers to pursue NBCT is what's best for our keiki.**

**Passing this bill will have a positive outcome for Hawaii's haumana by both attracting and helping to retain highly qualified educators. Nationally, Hawaii teacher salaries are not competitive, especially when the state's cost of living - the highest nationwide - is taken into account. Furthermore, our state's current incentive for NBCTs is half of what is standard on the mainland. NBCTs considering moving to Hawaii to teach will face pay cuts in real dollars as well as in spending power. Teachers who attain Board Certification in Hawaii may well consider relocating to a state with a lower cost of living and a higher NBCT incentive.**

**Hawaii has already taken important steps to make NBCT achievable for its teachers by reimbursing certification fees. Reimbursement is the only way that many of Hawaii's NBCTs can afford the certification process, and I am grateful for this commitment to helping Hawaii's teachers pursue certification.**

**If the legislature recognizes that a significant factor in ensuring student growth and strong learning outcomes is the presence of a highly qualified teacher in all classrooms, then it will take the action necessary to make teaching in Hawaii affordable for NBCTs and to attract NBCTs to our state. Passing HB 1893 is a critical next step.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify, and for your commitment to the teachers pursuing the excellence that our keiki deserve.**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:27:37 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline Rasmussen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is **Jacqueline Rasmussen**, and I have taught at **Kahuku High & Intermediate School** in **Ko'olau'loa** for 10 years—my entire career since graduating college. I am writing in **strong support of HB 1893 HD1**.

**My Story:**

For a decade, I have worked full-time as an educator while simultaneously working a second part-time job during the school year and side-gigs over the summer just to make ends meet. Every year, I consider leaving Hawai'i for a more affordable state, but my love for this community has kept me here. I recently completed my National Board Certification specifically to improve my pay, and for the first time in 10 years, I may finally be able to quit my second job during the school year.

However, with rising rent and inflation, that sense of security is fragile. The thought of working two or more jobs for another decade is soul-crushing, yet the thought of leaving my students is equally painful. This bill would provide the financial stability I need to finally drop the second job and instead dedicate that time to coaching or attending the school events I currently miss. If you want experienced educators to stay in Hawai'i, this bill is an essential investment.

**Why This Bill Matters:** Hawai'i's incentive program must remain competitive to retain veteran teachers. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000+ annual incentives. HB 1893 brings Hawai'i back in line with these leading states.

The data confirms that this investment directly benefits our haumāna:

- **Student Growth:** Students of NBCTs gain an average of **1–2 months of additional learning** per year.
- **Proven Results:** In other jurisdictions, students with NBCTs were **31% more likely** to reach literacy proficiency.

- **Retention:** NBCTs leave the profession at **one-third the rate** of their peers. This bill creates the stability that every Hawai'i district—including our public charter schools—desperately needs.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB 1893 HD1. It is a direct investment in the educators who are committed to staying in the classroom and serving our local communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**Jacqueline Rasmussen** |

Chemistry and Physics Teacher, Kahuku High & Intermediate School, Ko'olau  
jacq.rasmussen@gmail.com

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:29:33 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nicole Suzuki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**My name is Nicole Suzuki, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Honouliuli Middle School], Leeward District, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**I was drawn to pursue National Board Certification because I heard that the purpose of the certification process was to help teachers grow in their craft, and I was also highly motivated by the financial incentive. It is an intensive, optional, and expensive process teachers can undertake that has a direct benefit to students.**

**Through the certification process, I was prompted to reflect more critically and deeply about the lessons I was teaching and how to best meet the individual needs of my students. I modified writing strategies I had previously used and methods of providing students feedback to be more effective. I was prompted to focus more intentionally on each of my students, and I learned about where to access information that would help me better serve their individual needs. Through this professional development experience, I have also grown as a teacher leader and am better able to lead my school’s Social Studies department and mentor colleagues in need of support. I was able to develop and sustain a plan to increase student writing through all Social Studies classes at our school where students are learning to think critically about historical questions, apply their learning, and articulate their opinions. Additionally, my students consistently score highest in my grade level for ELA on their annual Smarter Balanced Assessments and I have had students receiving Special Education and English Language services, who had previously never passed the assessment, pass their test. This indicates that my students have made significant gains in one school year and helps to close the achievement gap. I attribute this gain to my abilities to support their growth and learning throughout the school year as a result of my learning through the NBCT process.**

**Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

**HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teachers were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.**

**Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.**

**Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Nicole Suzuki  
8th grade ELA and SS teacher, Social Studies Department Head  
Honouliuli Middle School  
Leeward District, O'ahu  
nicolelaprade@gmail.com**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:30:32 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shanna Nakamura-Heaton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

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

**My name is Shanna Nakamura-Heaton, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Ali'iolani Elementary School, Honolulu, Hawai'i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**I pursued National Board Certification initially because of the pay incentive, which would help provide more stability for my family here in Hawai'i, where the cost of living is incredibly high. As a classroom teacher, I also wanted confirmation that I was doing the very best I could for my students. Completing Component 4 transformed my practice — it forced me to deeply analyze assessment data and reflect honestly on whether my teaching was truly effective, and it strengthened how I use assessments to reach every learner. The \$5,000 incentive has directly impacted my ability to remain in the profession; both my husband and I are educators, and without that support, we would have had to consider leaving education to support our daughter and manage the rising costs of preschool and housing. Because of this process, I not only helped 100% of my students reach grade-level benchmarks in reading diagnostic last year, but I have also grown as a teacher leader on my campus, mentoring colleagues and helping others pursue certification so more students can benefit.**

**Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

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**Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Shanna Nakamura-Heaton | General Education Teacher | Ali'iolani Elementary School,  
Honolulu | [shanna.nakamura@k12.hi.us](mailto:shanna.nakamura@k12.hi.us)**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:40:28 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalia Sandoval	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Here is a streamlined, polished version of your testimony that keeps your voice strong while making it more concise and compelling:

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My name is Natalia Sandoval, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher (Exceptional Needs Specialist, Birth–Age 22) at Waikīkī Elementary School in the Honolulu District, Farrington-Kaiser-Kalani Complex, Honolulu, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1 and respectfully urge this committee to pass this important bill.

I pursued National Board Certification because I wanted to challenge myself and strengthen my instructional practices to better serve my students. Achieving this certification required deep reflection, rigorous assessment, and a sustained commitment to professional growth. There are relatively few teachers who hold this distinction, and I am proud not only to have earned National Board Certification, but to have maintained it for the past eight years.

National Board Certified Teachers are held to the highest professional standards. Maintaining certification requires ongoing learning, reflection, and evidence that our practice continues to meet those standards. The current \$5,000 annual bonus acknowledges this work, but it does not fully reflect the level of expertise, commitment, and leadership that NBCTs bring to their schools and communities.

Doubling the bonus to \$10,000 would send a strong message that Hawai‘i values accomplished teachers and is committed to retaining them. It would also help position our state as a national leader in recognizing and supporting high-quality educators.

Additionally, extending eligibility to public charter school teachers ensures equity and fairness. Accomplished teaching should be recognized consistently, regardless of school setting.

As a special education teacher with 21 years of dedicated service at the same public school, I believe this bill is an investment in teacher excellence, stability, and student success. Supporting National Board Certified Teachers ultimately supports the students and families we serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your commitment to Hawai‘i’s educators and keiki. I respectfully urge you to pass HB 1893 HD1.

Aloha,

Natalia Sandoval, MA SpEd, NBCT

## HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Ashley Piche, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary School, Central District, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

In my eighth year of teaching, pursuing my National Board Certification allowed me to reflect on my personal practice and focus on refining the "why" behind every lesson I taught. At Pearl Harbor Kai, my students are very transient as most of their families are military, so having a teacher that is Nationally Board Certified ensures that they are receiving strong, evidence based learning opportunities that align with high standards. Because of this process, my students didn't just get a more credentialed teacher—they got a mentor who now models the exact kind of grit and lifelong learning we expect from them.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

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The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

[Ashley Piche] [First Grade Teacher] [Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary School] [Central Oahu] [Ashley.piche@k12.hi.us]

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:45:05 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lourena Yco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Lourena Yco, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Highlands Intermediate School, Leeward, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I chose to complete my National Board Certification for early adolescent English Language Arts because of the reflective components of the process. It is easy to fall into the same routine every year of same lessons and handouts. The biggest challenge as an ELA teacher is technology and the growing number of students no longer reading for leisure at home. With NBCT, I am able to not only think about what I teach and how I teach, but why I teach. Using this knowledge, I am able to create spaces where students can think critically and express themselves well.

Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

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The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:48:05 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dianne Pang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Written Testimony in Support of HB 1893**

**Submitted by:** Dianne Pang, National Board Certified Teacher

**School:** Kaimuki Middle School

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

I am writing in strong support of **HB 1893**, which proposes to increase the annual bonus pay for National Board Certified Teachers from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

When I first pursued National Board Certification, I will admit that the state bonus was a real incentive. However, once I entered the process, I quickly realized how much it demanded of me as an educator. I had to look closely at my teaching — deeply reflect on my practices, analyze student work, and consider how each instructional choice affected learning. That reflection has stayed with me. Even now, years later, I regularly review and adjust my lessons to improve outcomes for all students.

One specific shift I’ve made as a result of certification is how I plan and scaffold instruction. My lessons now include purposeful supports for English Language Learners and students who receive special education services. The structure of my lessons is clearer, my expectations are more transparent, and my students have responded with higher engagement and stronger skill growth — especially in reading and writing. I see measurable improvement in their ability to think, express, and reflect, which directly ties back to the habits of analysis I developed during my National Board journey.

National Board Certification also inspired me to lead beyond my classroom. I have mentored three teachers through the certification process, guiding them as they refined their pedagogy. Each of them emerged as a stronger, more reflective educator — and that growth benefits our entire school community.

At this point in my career, I could retire. The continuing bonus is one of the few incentives that keeps experienced teachers like me in the classroom. Increasing the bonus to \$10,000 acknowledges both the level of professional expertise that National Board Certification represents and the lasting impact these teachers have on student learning across Hawaii.

I respectfully urge you to support **HB 1893** and invest in retaining Hawaii's accomplished teachers — for the good of our students and our schools.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

**Dianne Pang**

National Board Certified Teacher

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:49:44 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Peterson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program

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

My name is Julia Peterson, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Molokai High School, Molokai, Hawai‘i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I have been a National Board Certified Teacher in the area of School Counseling since 2014 and have recently completed my Maintenance of Certification in 2024. National Board has stretched my leadership skills and strengthened of my craft profoundly. I have been coaching other school counselors on island as well as off island in completing their HTSB licensing as well as certification in NBCT. My goal is to have a certified school counselor at every school on Molokai before I retire. I have been able to achieve that goal at four out of six schools on Molokai. I also am a part of the HSTA National Board Support Team. I help NBCT candidates through support groups and trainings as candidates navigate the NBCT program. The financial support of NBCT has afforded me to continue working in the DOE even though I am eligible for retirement. This incentive is key to my continuing to work in this field.

Hawai‘i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

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Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Julia Peterson, Registrar, Molokai High School, Maui District, [petersonjuliaan@gmail.com](mailto:petersonjuliaan@gmail.com)

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

My name is [Name], and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at [School], [District], Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I was initially drawn to National Board certification (in the area of Literacy) because of the pay increase. At the time, I was looking to upgrade to a larger home and needed the funding to afford that. I didn't really think that the process of being board certified would improve my teaching, however, videotaping my instruction and reflecting on it really helped me to see ways that I could improve my craft. This is the gift of being nationally certified; it really taught me to be reflective of my teaching and encouraged me to seek out ways to improve. Following certification, I continued to further my education at UH-Manoa through their Reading Interventionist Certificate program. Following that, I was LETRS trained and applied to be a Response to Intervention teacher at my school. The students that I work with currently benefit from this because their instruction is carefully mapped out and planned based on their specific needs. This instruction is research based through the Science of Reading and would not have been possible without all of the learning that took place through the National Board certification process.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

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Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Summer Medeiros

Certified National Board Teacher

King Kaumualii Elementary School, District of Kauai

10072402@k12.hi.us

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:00:59 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dawn Fraser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dawn Fraser, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Kailua High School, Windward District/Kailua-Kalaheo Complex, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I first earned my national board certification as a school counselor in 2011 and recertification in 2021. I am a certified science teacher and school counselor. In my 33rd year of employment with the Hawaii State DOE, I have been a classroom teacher, program coordinator, 504 counselor, grade level counselor, testing coordinator, department chair, and am currently a college and career counselor.

In all honesty, I first became interested when my colleagues encouraged me to pursue national board certification and explained that I could also earn extra pay. But through the process (It took me three attempts to earn my initial certification.), I learned not only how to set up a process and system to analyze our school community and identify student needs based upon data. I also learned how to think not only of one student, but groups of students and of our school community as a whole. Through this process, I identified a small group of girls who had just had a baby or were about to be a single, teen mom. What I learned was that they, just as their peers who were valedictorians and high-achieving students, still had goals and wanted to be able to provide for themselves and their babies. It taught me to look beyond the numbers and data, and consider individual students while planning, implementing, and analyzing. I have applied that same perspective ever since. Whether I am planning for a college or FAFSA application day, working with students and their families on their post-high plans, or helping students with their applications, I remember the individuals and their families.

My teacher and school counselor training did not prepare me with the skills and perspectives that national board certification has. I believe it is just as important for teachers and counselors to be trained in how to assess data in order to find trends, needs, and groups of underserved students who need additional support so that they can access and take advantage of the many opportunities within our public school system.

I humbly ask and urge that you support HB 1893 in support of Hawaii’s public educators.

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:09:52 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alison Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

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

**Aloha,**

**My name is Alison Awai, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) in the area of Literacy–Early and Middle Childhood at Jefferson Elementary School in Waikiki in the Kaimuki/ McKinley/ Roosevelt District. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.**

**Before becoming an NBCT I didn’t know how to teach, except by the book. Afterward, I had a myriad of teaching strategies at my finger tips, which engaged students and made teaching/learning fun. I gained confidence to branch out into project-based learning, integrating STEM with ELA activities.**

**Two years ago, we learned about biomimicry and used a 3D printer to make a net to catch plankton from the Ala Wai Canal. Groups made stick puppets and put on a show that had “plankton police” who watched out for the *opae huna* or native shrimp that we caught from the Canal. Students developed a sense of *kuleana*, or responsibility for the place, and a deepened *malama* for local animals as a result.**

**That Dec, my class’ median growth on iReady in overall reading was 136%; the expected growth at the halfway point was 50%.**

**Providing meaningful, relevant, interesting, place-based, hands-on activities across curriculum, integrating Science and ELA, is something I became capable of doing as a result of being an NBCT. I believe the extra funds you provide to motivate teachers to become Nationally Board Certified could make all the difference in the world for students.**

**Hawai’i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning**

**Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.**

**HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i’s incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.**

**The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.**

**Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Alison Awai; NBCT Literacy–Early and Middle Childhood; 3rd Grade Teacher; Jefferson Elementary School; KMR District; [alison.awai@k12.hi.us](mailto:alison.awai@k12.hi.us)**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:23:29 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Camille Hampton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Camille Hampton, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Wai‘anae High School, Leeward District, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

Becoming a National Board Certified Teacher was the most impactful professional learning experience of my career. Through the process, I realized that strong teaching is not about delivering content but about intentionally designing instruction around my students’ individual learning needs, especially in my hard-to-staff high school, where many students require differentiated support. I began using student evidence more purposefully to adjust my lessons, and I saw greater engagement and growth as a result. National Board Certification also gave me the confidence to pursue a Master’s and Doctorate degree and to serve as a teacher leader focused on school improvement. The bonus has made it possible for me to spend less time working a second job and more time investing in my students and my school community.

Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs (plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools) and have seen dramatic results. Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i’s incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs, with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools, is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers, a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

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

My name is Brandi Underwood, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Enchanted Lake Elementary, Windward District on the island of Oahu, Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

Teaching is a living thing—one that requires constant nourishment, critique, and adaptation. The process of obtaining and maintaining my National Board Teaching Licence requires me, as a teacher, to engage with all three of these. This process has impacted both me as a teacher and my students as learners. The biggest impact this process has had on me as a teacher is that my practice has become highly intentional and refined to meet the needs of all learners. For my students the biggest impact has been their success in learning to read because of my increased knowledge in teaching them how to read. Receiving my board certification helped me feel more prepared and confident in my teaching practices and prevent the common burn out that most teachers experience.

Hawai'i's National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai'i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Brandi Underwood | M.Ed., NBCT | Enchanted Lake Elementary, Windward District  
| brandi.underwood@k12.hi.us

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:50:54 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joy Paul	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Joy Paul, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Holualoa Elementary School on Hawai'i Island. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

The journey to becoming a National Board Certified Teacher has been among the best professional development I've encountered. I am a stronger teacher and reflective learner while my students are the direct beneficiaries.

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

Supporting this bill is one small way to make an investment into our local communities and in a profession with outstanding and unusual vacancies. Hawaii's keiki and community will be stronger.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Joy Paul, NBCT

Holualoa Elementary School

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:52:29 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Genevieve Aken	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

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

**My name is Genevieve (Lei) Aken, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Wai‘anae High School in Honolulu, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1 and respectfully urge this committee to pass it.**

**Pursuing National Board Certification was never about a title for me — it was about being a role model for my students and my Wai‘anae community. I wanted my haumāna to see that when we put our mind and heart into something, we can achieve it, no matter where we come from. The rigorous reflective process challenged me to examine every aspect of my teaching practice. As a result, my classroom shifted in powerful ways. I became more intentional in designing project-based, real-world learning experiences that connected directly to my students’ lives and futures. More importantly, I learned how to guide my students in reflecting on their own thinking and learning — helping them take ownership of their growth and elevate their academic progression.**

**National Board Certification also strengthened me as a leader. The deep reflection required through the process sharpened my ability not only to refine my own practice but to support and grow other educators. My students benefitted most — they were better taught, and as a result, deeper and more meaningful learning occurred. While NBCT teachers are committed far beyond the financial incentive, the additional compensation has been significant in allowing me to remain in a profession I love and to continue serving my community here in Hawai‘i. Our students and our community deserve the very best version of us, and striving for excellence means doing our part to continuously grow. Supporting National Board Certified Teachers is an investment in high-quality education for our keiki and in the long-term stability of our schools.**

**Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the strongest in the nation, signaling that our state values accomplished teaching. Over time, however, other states have moved ahead while Hawai‘i has fallen behind. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs, along with additional incentives for those serving in high-need schools. After strengthening its program, Maryland saw a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification. Hawai‘i has not experienced comparable**

**growth, and that gap ultimately impacts our students — particularly those in communities that most need experienced, highly accomplished educators.**

**HB 1893 restores Hawai‘i’s commitment to teaching excellence. By establishing a \$10,000 annual bonus for National Board Certified Teachers — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — this measure represents a strategic investment in both quality instruction and teacher retention. It affirms that Hawai‘i values educators who commit to the highest professional standards and choose to remain in the classroom.**

**The research supporting this investment is clear. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain the equivalent of one to two additional months of learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarten students with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. Additionally, National Board Certified Teachers leave the profession at roughly one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that is critical for Hawai‘i’s schools as we work to stabilize and strengthen our educator workforce.**

**At Wai‘anae High School, I serve students who are brilliant, resilient, and deeply rooted in their community. They deserve accomplished teachers who are committed to refining their craft and remaining in the classroom for the long term. When the State invests in National Board Certified Teachers, it is not rewarding individuals — it is strengthening schools like ours and expanding opportunity for students who depend on stable, high-quality instruction.**

**HB 1893 is about educational equity, workforce stability, and honoring the professionalism of Hawai‘i’s educators. It sends a clear message that excellence matters and that Hawai‘i is committed to keeping accomplished teachers in our classrooms. I respectfully ask that you pass HB 1893 HD1 and continue to invest in the educators and students who represent the future of our state.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.**

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:54:36 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary Matsukawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

National Board Certification is the ‘Gold Standard’ of the teaching profession. It is not just a credential; it is a rigorous, years-long process that fundamentally changes how a teacher practices. Research shows that students of NBCTs gain an additional 1–2 months of learning per year compared to peers in other classrooms, the impact of having an NBCT is even more significant for low-income students and students of color, helping to close the achievement gap, and NBCTs don’t just stay in the classroom; they serve as mentors and instructional leaders, elevating the quality of every teacher in their building.

Right now, we are facing a critical teacher shortage. We need to keep our most effective educators in the classroom. A larger bonus is a high-return investment. It costs significantly more to recruit and train a new teacher than it does to retain an accomplished one through a meaningful stipend. To keep our best talent, our compensation must reflect the high level of expertise these teachers bring.

Increasing this bonus is a direct investment in student achievement. I urge you to support UB 1893 and ensure that every student has access to an accomplished, Board-certified teacher. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to our schools.

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:56:59 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharon Look	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

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

My name is Sharon Look, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher in the Hāna-Lahainaluna-Lāna‘i-Moloka‘i Complex Area, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

The process to become National Board certified has helped me deepen my practice as I reflect on my areas of strength and need. I am in the process of maintaining my certification (for the second time) and appreciate the opportunity to analyze the areas where I have spent my professional learning time and how it has positively impacted student learning and growth. In particular, I’ve spent a large part of the last 10 years learning more about and implementing the science of reading. I have been able to share this knowledge with teachers and students. As a result, students are benefitting from more explicit foundational reading skill knowledge. In order to improve the number of students reading proficiently, leading to adults that can positively contribute to society, we first need to ensure students can read (decode) text.

Personally, I’m also passionate about supporting older students with unfinished reading foundational skills. As a National Board teacher, I plan to tap our network of educators to learn more from them.

The cost of living in Hawai‘i has increased astronomically and the proposed additional \$5,000 will provide me, as well as other National Board certified teachers, with the financial flexibility to stay in Hawai‘i. It is difficult to make ends meet on a current teacher salary. It saddens me that I stand in the aisle at Costco deciding whether I can afford the \$7.49 bag of popcorn (as an after school snack).

Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai'i's incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai'i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sharon Look

HLLM Complex Area Support Teacher

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:17:08 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leanna Ikei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Leanna Ikei, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Mayor Joseph J. Fern Elementary School, Honolulu, Hawai‘i. I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

My journey for National Board Certification started in 2015. I was approached by a colleague who shared with me the process, and I am forever grateful to have had this experience to reflect on my teaching practice. Through the National Board Certification process, I challenged myself through community partnerships to bring experiences to our students and collaborated with other teachers through data-driven instructional strategies. I felt the experiences provided clarity towards my lessons for my students, and focused on helping them grow as learners through lessons related to real-life problem-solving. They grew as critical thinkers and became more inquisitive about the world around them.

Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i’s incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is an equally important step. Charter school students deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their public school peers. This provision closes a gap that should not have existed in the first place.

Every student in Hawai'i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Leanna Ikei | Teacher | Mayor Joseph J. Fern Elementary School, Honolulu  
District | [leanna.agcaoili@gmail.com](mailto:leanna.agcaoili@gmail.com)

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:31:23 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ryan Kanetani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Ryan Kanetani, and I am a long-time National Board Certified Teacher in the area of Students with Exceptional Needs. I am writing in strong support of HB1893, which would increase the annual statewide National Board bonus from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and extend eligibility to charter school teachers.

Earning National Board Certification is one of the most rigorous and meaningful professional accomplishments of my career. The process is demanding, reflective, and deeply rooted in evidence-based practice. It requires educators to analyze their teaching, assess student outcomes, and continuously refine instruction to meet the evolving needs of our learners. Achieving this certification is proof of a teacher’s dedication to the craft and commitment to continuous improvement.

As a certificate holder in Students with Exceptional Needs, the process has strengthened my understanding that teaching practices must constantly evolve. Our students change. Their needs change. The world they are growing up in changes. National Board Certification requires us to demonstrate that we are adapting to those changes and improving our practice accordingly. The recertification process every five years ensures that we do not remain stagnant but continue to grow alongside our students.

While I am incredibly grateful for the position I hold and the opportunity to serve Hawai‘i’s students, the work required to maintain National Board Certification is significant. It is time-intensive, rigorous, and often completed outside of regular school hours while balancing family and professional responsibilities. Increasing the annual bonus would acknowledge the level of expertise and commitment required to earn and maintain this certification. It would also make the recertification process feel more sustainable and valued.

Additionally, doubling the bonus would encourage more educators to pursue National Board Certification. In the wake of COVID-19, we have seen firsthand how dramatically student needs can shift. Our teaching strategies, systems, and supports must evolve as well. This bill is not simply about compensation, it is about investing in high-quality teaching and encouraging educators to continually refine their practice for the benefit of our keiki.

Extending eligibility to charter school teachers is also a meaningful and equitable step forward. All students in Hawai‘i deserve access to highly accomplished teachers, regardless of the type of public school they attend.

HB1893 recognizes and rewards professional excellence, sustained growth, and dedication to Hawai‘i’s students. I respectfully urge you to support this important measure for the betterment of our educators and the future of our keiki.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Thank you for your time,  
Ryan Kanetani  
National Board Certified Teacher  
Students with Exceptional Needs

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:47:11 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Ogle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writng in support of HB1893. I am a veteran teacher (20 years) at Kula Elementary in Maui. I went through the National Board Certification process five years ago. It really helped to make me a highly effective teacher. It is such a rigorous, time consuming and expensive process (neighbor island teachers even need to travel to Oahu to take the exam). Additiionally, it rewards superb teachers. Research shows again and again the profound difference in student learning and achievement with excellent teachers. NBT makes and rewards excellence in teaching. I urge you to pass this resolution.

Mahalo!

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:15:07 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Carlson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Amy Carlson, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher serving in Hawai‘i as a School Support Coordinator. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1 and respectfully urge you to pass it.

Pursuing National Board Certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was the most rigorous and meaningful professional development of my 25+ year career. The process required me to analyze my teaching, justify instructional decisions with evidence, and systematically reflect on student outcomes. As a result, my practice became more intentional, data-driven, and responsive to individual student needs.

One concrete example is how I now design and monitor Tier 2 interventions. Through the Board process, I strengthened my ability to identify specific skill deficits, implement targeted supports, and collect and analyze progress-monitoring data. This has been especially important in my role coordinating with general education teachers, special education staff, and administrators to determine whether a student’s lack of progress reflects a need for instructional adjustment or potential eligibility for special education services. My documentation is more precise, my collaboration is stronger, and our decisions are better grounded in evidence.

National Board Certification also expanded my leadership capacity. As a School Support Coordinator, I work across grade levels and departments. The certification process deepened my understanding of culturally sustaining practices, differentiated instruction, and assessment literacy—areas that directly influence how I coach teachers and support struggling learners. It has improved not only my classroom practice but also my ability to positively impact instruction schoolwide.

The financial incentive tied to National Board Certification has also mattered. Hawai‘i’s cost of living is high, and the incentive helped make it feasible for me to remain in the Hawai‘i Department of Education rather than pursue opportunities elsewhere. Retaining experienced, accomplished teachers is critical to student stability and achievement.

HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program — restores Hawai‘i’s commitment to accomplished teaching. Reestablishing a \$10,000 annual incentive, with an

additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools, aligns Hawai'i more closely with leading states and signals that this level of professional expertise is valued.

Extending eligibility to public charter school teachers is also essential. Students in charter schools deserve the same access to accomplished educators as their peers in traditional public schools.

National Board Certification strengthens instructional practice, improves collaboration, supports data-informed decision-making, and increases teacher retention. HB 1893 is a strategic investment in educational quality and workforce stability.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:09:15 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kalelani Ogata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Finance Committee,

I am a 25 year veteran teacher. I am a National Board Certified Teacher (Exceptional Needs Specialist) currently going through my first Maintenance Of Certification (MOC). I had goals of becoming board certified years ago when the stipend was at \$10,000. At the time I was not able to pursue NBCT. When I was finally able to pursue board certification I found out it was reduced to \$5000. I still pursued my goal as I wanted to be a better teacher. The journey and process of becoming board certified was very rigorous. I feel like I accomplished so much and grew a lot in my teaching practice, becoming a better teacher for my students, advocate, and leader in my school and community. Where as other sectors of the work force receive 3 annual bonuses based on performance. Teachers are not afforded that. Being National Board Certified we should be getting our fair share of a bonus for all we continue to do to uplift learning and schools. Please raise the NBCT bonus back to \$10,000 where it used to be. We who have gone through the certification are worth it. Thank you.

March 2, 2026

Aloha State of Hawai'i House of Representatives,

I am writing in support of HB 1893. HB 1893 would double the annual statewide National Board bonus in Hawai'i from \$5,000 to \$10,000 — and extend eligibility to charter school teachers for the first time. This bill is a helpful start in updating the compensation National Board Certified teachers (NBCT) receive for their dedication and investment in their profession. This NBCT bonus is an investment in the quality of the education delivered in the state of Hawai'i.

I am writing as an individual and I am writing as a 17 year teacher on the island of Molokai. I wanted desperately to be the very best educator that I could be for the very needy community where I live and teach. When I learned about the National Board Teacher Certification, I decided to embark on the educational journey. This professional development program is not like any other I have participated in. It was a series of readings, classroom observations, analysis of student work and board certification tests. It is very difficult to achieve National Board Certification in Teaching and after four years, I can proudly say, I am a NBCT.

Being a National Board Certified Teacher has benefited my students, my classroom academics, my professional learning community and my professional leadership at the school level. I conduct professional development workshops for teachers and administrators and much of my confidence and success comes from my NBCT status. Doubling the annual statewide National Board bonus in Hawai'i from \$5,000 to \$10,000 is necessary in this economic climate. The money spent by the Hawai'i Legislature will be well used to support education in rural and urban locations, creating better trained teachers with more ambition to sustain successful schools. The increased bonus will elevate and incentivise NBCT status and this one investment will improve the level of teaching and learning across the state.

Please support HB 1893.

Mahalo for your time, respectfully

Joyce Haase  
PO Box 482242  
Kaunakakai, HI 96748

**HB-1893-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 4:06:45 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
May Anne Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1893 — Teacher National Board Certification Incentive Program**

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

My name is May Anne Kim, and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Honowai Elementary School, Leeward District, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of HB 1893 HD1, and I urge this committee to pass it.

I pursued National Board Certification because I wanted to better understand how young children learn and how to build strong foundations in literacy, language, and confidence during the most critical years of development. One powerful shift in my classroom was how I began more intentionally supporting multilingual learners and students with special needs — using targeted scaffolds, visual supports, structured language routines, and differentiated small-group instruction so that every child could access grade-level content. In a district with a high population of multilingual learners and students receiving specialized services, this deeper understanding transformed how I plan, assess, and respond to student needs.

Board certification strengthened my commitment to remain in early elementary education, where high-quality teaching has lifelong impact. However, for teachers who are already at the top of the pay scale, the current \$5,000 incentive does not carry the same meaningful weight, particularly in Hawai‘i’s high cost-of-living context. Increasing the incentive to \$10,000 would ensure that accomplished, veteran teachers are not only recognized, but truly incentivized to continue serving in our classrooms.

Hawai‘i’s National Board incentive program was once among the most competitive in the nation. It is no longer. States like Maryland now offer \$10,000 or more annually for NBCTs — plus additional bonuses for those who teach in high-need schools — and have seen dramatic results: Maryland experienced a 980 percent increase in teachers newly earning Board certification after strengthening its incentives. Hawai‘i has not seen comparable growth in recent years, and that gap has real consequences for students.

HB 1893 brings Hawai‘i’s incentive back in line with what other leading states offer. The \$10,000 annual bonus for NBCTs — with an additional \$5,000 for those serving in high-need schools — is a direct investment in accomplished teaching and the educators who commit to staying in the classroom.

The research behind this investment is compelling. Students taught by National Board Certified Teachers gain one to two months of additional learning per school year compared to peers taught by non-certified teachers. In Mississippi, kindergarteners with an NBCT literacy teacher were 31 percent more likely to reach literacy proficiency. And NBCTs leave the profession at one-third the rate of their peers — a retention advantage that every Hawai‘i district needs.

Every student in Hawai‘i deserves to be taught by a teacher who has demonstrated excellence and is committed to continued growth. HB 1893 makes that goal more achievable. I respectfully urge this committee to advance it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

May Anne Kim

Honowai Elementary, Leeward

may\_anne.kim@k12.hi.us