

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



ROY M. TAKUMI
CHAIRPERSON

**STATE OF HAWAII
BOARD OF EDUCATION
PAPA HO'ONA'AUAO**
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

House Committee on Education
Thursday, February 19, 2026
2:00 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 309

Measure: House Bill 2445 HD1, Relating to the Student Safety

Purpose of Measure:

Requires the Department of Education to develop, adopt, and implement a standardized emergency response plan governing immigration enforcement activity at or within one thousand feet of public schools and adopt policies and procedures to address immigration enforcement activity at certain school-related location and events. Effective 7/1/3000.

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

The Board of Education (Board) greatly appreciates the Legislature's concern regarding the safety of our students, and respectfully offers comments supporting the intent of House Bill 2445 HD1, noting that the Hawai'i Department of Education currently has procedures and guidance in place to respond to law enforcement activity, including that of federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

ICE officials have been regularly conducting activities in and around school campuses throughout the country, which has created an atmosphere of fear and anxiety in public spaces within which children should feel safest. Such activities are also having a devastating impact on teachers and their ability to do their jobs at these schools, as described in testimony through an emergency motion filed in federal court by the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers.

Having recognized the ramifications early on, the Board passed a resolution at its April 10, 2025, general business meeting, declaring that Department schools “should be places where its students can learn and thrive free of fear, conflict, and stress.” The resolution also states the Board’s:

- Denouncement of “immigration and enforcement activity at Department schools unless exigent circumstances exist, such as those that relate to preservation of life or prevention of catastrophic outcomes, as has been defined by the United States Department of Homeland Security, or applicable state and federal law.”
- Recognition and support of the Department's current policy to not ask families for their immigration status and to not record such information in student records, as it has no bearing on the responsibility to keep all of our students safe and empower them to innovate, serve, and lead.

The Board defers to the Department regarding its procedures and guidance that addresses conduct at schools by all law enforcement agencies.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Board.



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

Date: 02/19/2026

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: EDN

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB2445, HD1, RELATING TO STUDENT SAFETY.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to develop, adopt, and implement a standardized emergency response plan governing immigration enforcement activity at or within one thousand feet of public schools and adopt policies and procedures to address immigration enforcement activity at certain school-related location and events. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

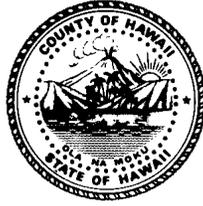
The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) would like to provide comments on HB 2445, HD 1, for the committee's consideration.

The Department believes that this bill is unnecessary because the Department currently has procedures in place that accomplish most of the requirements set forth in the bill. In March 2025, the Department issued law enforcement guidance that addresses conduct at schools by all law enforcement agencies, including Immigrations and Custom Enforcement. The guidance designates the principal or designee as the point of contact for all law enforcement interactions. The principal or designee is required to notify and involve the principal or designee's chain of command and the Department of the Attorney General. Additionally, the guidance requires all law enforcement to present warrants and subpoenas for review. The Department also has the necessary counseling and behavioral health resources to respond and mitigate the effects of potential traumatic incidents such as immigration enforcement activities at or near schools.

The Department is concerned with references to address immigration enforcement activities occurring within one thousand feet of a school campus. A school does not have authority or control over activities outside school property except in limited instances, such as sporting events.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to HB 2445, HD 1.

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



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

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: February 18, 2026
TO: House Committee on Education
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB2445

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

I am writing in **strong support of HB2445**. Schools must be safe, stable places for all students to learn. Creating and implementing a standardized emergency response plan will give educators clear guidance, protect student safety and privacy, and reduce confusion and panic during emergencies—so learning can continue and families can trust that schools are prepared.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **PASS HB2445**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenn Kagiwada'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jenn Kagiwada



www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

Testimony of Liza Ryan-Gill
In SUPPORT of HB2445 HD1 RELATING TO STUDENT SAFETY

Hearing Date: Feb 19th, 2026, 2pm Room 309 (EDN)

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the Committee on Education,

My name is **Liza Ryan-Gill**, testifying on behalf of the **Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR)**. HCIR is a coalition of **30+ immigrant-serving and immigrant-led organizations** across the pae ‘āina working to advance policies that protect immigrant and migrant communities and strengthen Hawai‘i as a place where all families can thrive.

We strongly support **HB2445 HD1**, legislation that prohibits federal immigration officers from conducting immigration enforcement in schools.

Schools must be safe havens for children — places where students can learn, grow, and thrive without fear that they or their family members will be arrested, detained or deported. When immigration enforcement occurs in or around schools, it undermines attendance, harms student mental health, erodes trust between families and educators, and interferes with the fundamental mission of public education.

For many years, under long-standing federal policy, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security designated schools, churches, hospitals, and other “sensitive locations” as places where immigration enforcement actions were generally prohibited. This policy recognized that immigration enforcement in these settings causes profound harm to children, families, and community trust. However, under the current administration, these sensitive-location protections have been weakened or eliminated, allowing federal immigration officers greater discretion to conduct enforcement in and around schools. As a result, Hawai‘i can no longer rely on federal policy to protect students, making state-level safeguards like HB2445 HD1 both necessary and urgent.

Recent events in Kona underscore exactly why this legislation is urgently needed. Just a few months ago, a young student at Konawaena Elementary School was removed from campus by a school resource officer and turned over to federal authorities after his father was detained by immigration agents. The child was ultimately deported along with his father. This incident sparked widespread concern among educators, parents, and community members across Hawai‘i Island. Teachers and families reported that students were afraid to come to school, that attendance dropped, and that children were walking different routes home out of fear of encountering immigration agents.



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These are not abstract concerns — they are real harms happening to real children in our public schools. Community advocates have documented how immigration enforcement activity has created trauma, disrupted classrooms, and forced schools into impossible situations that conflict with their duty to protect students. Educators have described the experience as “heart-wrenching” and have called for stronger protections to ensure schools remain places of safety and stability.

HB2445 would provide clear, statewide protections so that children are not targeted or swept into immigration enforcement while at school. This bill aligns with long-standing principles that schools should be sensitive locations, where children’s rights, privacy, and well-being are prioritized. It also supports educators, who should never be placed in the position of facilitating immigration enforcement against their own students.

No child should be afraid to go to school. No parent should worry that dropping off their child could lead to family separation. And no teacher should have to choose between their professional duty and a child’s safety.

For these reasons, and in light of what has already happened in Kona, we strongly urge the Legislature to pass HB2445 HD1 and affirm that Hawai‘i’s schools are places of learning — not sites of immigration enforcement.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Liza Ryan Gill

Executive Director

Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights



COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Rep. Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Tuesday, February 19, 2026 at 2:00 pm
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 309
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT - HB 2445, HD1, RELATING TO STUDENT SAFETY.

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, Rep. Amato from Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Veronica Mendoza, Founding Executive Director of Roots Reborn and a founding coalition member of El Pueblo en Acción (EPA) Maui — *The People in Action Maui*. Roots Reborn **strongly supports HB2445, HD1**, Relating to Student Safety, which requires the Department of Education to develop, establish, and implement a standardized emergency response plan governing immigration enforcement activity at or near public schools.

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

Since December 2024, we have been meeting this new man-made disaster of shifting federal policies, increased militarized enforcement and rising fear head-on. The EPA Maui rapid response network and tipline made up of allied organizations and concerned community members exists because we believe an informed, calm community is a safer community.

Through this coalition, we have:

- Distributed over 3,500 flyers on constitutional rights
- Trained more than 700 community members through Know Your Rights workshops
- Delivered over 50 trainings to healthcare providers, social service organizations, business owners, faith communities, educators, and labor union leaders
- Processed more than 450 calls and texts through our tip line
- Trained over 60 volunteer observers in verification, de-escalation, and peaceful documentation

In spring 2025, EPA Maui began receiving reports of federal agents engaged in enforcement activity involving students and schools. Federal Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents conducted so-called “wellness checks” on “unaccompanied minors”— children who entered the United States without a parent or guardian and were later released to family members or sponsors. Under prior practice, these caregivers were not targeted for enforcement while children’s immigration cases were pending. With the shift to a mass-deportation approach, “wellness checks” became a pretext to locate and detain children’s family members and anyone in proximity. Within days, our tipline received reports statewide: agents at or near schools looking for children and relatives, children whose caregivers were suddenly detained, and school staff unsure how to care for students left with no adult to pick them up or how to respond to federal agents on or near campus.



Federal enforcement has also directly impacted teachers. In May 2025, federal agents executed a judicial warrant in the pre-dawn hours at a residence housing Maui Waena Intermediate School teachers. These educators, lawfully present on J-1 visas, were taken from their homes in bedclothes or wrapped only in blankets by armed agents and held outside for questioning for nearly an hour before being allowed to retrieve documents proving lawful status. They were not permitted to call the school to report they would be late. This incident sent shockwaves through the school and wider community and was widely reported in local media.

EPA Maui responded by deploying trained peaceful observers to provide Know Your Rights information to students and families and to observe interactions with federal agents, helping to ensure the rights of vulnerable community members were not violated. We also increased Know Your Rights trainings for school leaders and school communities. Through this work, one lesson is clear: schools, educators, students, and families are safer when there is a clear, standardized readiness and response plan for immigration enforcement activity at or near school grounds.

HB 2445, HD1 is a necessary, measured step to protect student safety and school stability. By requiring the Department of Education to adopt a standardized emergency response plan, this bill ensures that schools are prepared, staff know how to respond, and children are not left in crisis when federal enforcement appears at or near campus. Our communities' safety should never come at the expense of students' sense of safety at school.

For the sake of Hawai'i's students, families, and educators, we **urge you to support HB 2445, HD1** and to vote to pass it out of this committee. The need is urgent and the time is now.

Sinceramente,

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

Veronica Mendoza

Maui Roots Reborn, *Founding Executive Director*

El Pueblo en Accion Maui, *Founding Coalition Member*



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committee Education
Re: **HB2445 HD1 – Relating to Student Safety**
Hawaii State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 19, 2026; 2:00 PM

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, I am writing **in SUPPORT of HB2445 HD1**, which requires the Department of Education to develop, establish, and implement a standardized emergency response plan governing immigration enforcement activity at or near public schools.

Children learn best when they feel safe and supported. Unplanned immigration enforcement activities at or near schools can cause fear, confusion, and emotional distress that disrupt learning and put all students at those schools at risk of trauma.

Without guidance, school staff may not be equipped to respond in ways that reduce fear and help students stay calm. This bill ensures staff training includes trauma-informed practices, legal guidance, and strategies to de-escalate student anxiety.

In addition, when immigration enforcement occurs unexpectedly, routine school operations and dismissals may be interrupted, affecting attendance, learning, and family plans. A standardized response plan will help schools minimize disruption to instruction and keep keiki safe.

Protocols for notifying families, including multilingual communications where practicable, helps ensure that all families — especially those whose primary language is not English — understand what is happening and can make informed decisions for their children's safety.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy



HOUSE BILL 2445, HD1, RELATING TO STUDENT SAFETY

FEBRUARY 19, 2026 · EDN HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus supports HB 2445, HD1, relating to student safety, which requires the Department of Education to develop, adopt, and implement a standardized emergency response plan governing immigration enforcement activity at or within one thousand feet of public schools and adopt policies and procedures to address immigration enforcement activity at certain school-related location and events.

All students, regardless of immigration status, should be able to access education safely, without fear, and in alignment with longstanding constitutional and civil rights protections. A growing body of research shows that immigration enforcement actions—including raids and arrests in communities surrounding schools—have direct and measurable impacts on student attendance, academic performance, and mental health. According to a 2025 study by Stanford University researcher Thomas Dee, immigration raids in California's Central Valley were associated with a 22 percent increase in student absences, with even larger increases among younger students, demonstrating the immediate educational disruption caused by enforcement actions.

Additional national research confirms that these effects are not isolated. According to a November 2025 analysis published by The Journalist's Resource, immigration enforcement crackdowns in 2025 led to spikes in student absenteeism in California and measurable declines in student test

**Kris Coffield, Chairperson • Camron Hurt, Vice Chairperson •
Amy Perruso and Justin Hughey, SCC Members**

scores in Florida, indicating that enforcement actions affect academic performance across multiple states. These impacts extend beyond students directly targeted by ICE enforcement. According to research summarized by Chalkbeat in 2025, increases in immigration arrests caused test score declines even among U.S. citizen students in affected communities, particularly in high-poverty schools, demonstrating a broad “spillover effect” where fear and instability disrupt learning for entire classrooms.

School leaders across the country are reporting these consequences in real time. According to a 2025 EdWeek Research Center survey, nearly half of educators working with immigrant families reported that students expressed fear or anxiety due to immigration enforcement, and about one-quarter reported reduced attendance and student disengagement in the classroom. The effects on school communities are also visible in large-scale attendance disruptions following high-profile enforcement actions. According to reporting by ABC News and other outlets, immigration enforcement operations in major cities have been linked to declines in school enrollment and attendance, including thousands of students missing school due to fear of immigration arrests in their communities.

Recent news coverage highlights the severity of these disruptions. For example, in 2025, immigration raids in Charlotte, North Carolina led to more than 30,000 students missing school in a single district, while enforcement activity near schools has triggered lockdowns, community panic, and long-term trauma for students and families. Research also shows that the psychological toll on students is significant. According to child development experts writing in Greater Good Magazine in 2026, immigration raids are inflicting “a terrible toll on children’s mental health and education,” with families creating contingency plans in case parents are detained and students experiencing sustained stress that affects their ability to learn.

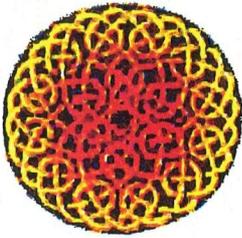
These outcomes are consistent with broader findings that immigration enforcement can create a “chilling effect” on school participation. According to the American Immigration Council in 2025, families in affected communities have pulled children out of school out of fear that a parent or child could be detained, illustrating how enforcement actions undermine access to education on a national scale. Importantly, these harms occur even when enforcement actions do not take place directly on school campuses. The proximity of enforcement to school environments, or the

fear that it could occur, is sufficient to disrupt attendance, learning, and well-being. Federal policy changes in 2025 rescinded prior guidance discouraging immigration enforcement in “sensitive locations” such as schools and churches, increasing anxiety among school communities.

This measure addresses these harms by affirming that Hawai‘i schools must remain safe, welcoming spaces dedicated to learning, not sites of enforcement actions that disrupt students’ education and well-being. The bill aligns with constitutional principles, including the Supreme Court’s decision in *Plyler v. Doe*, which affirmed that all children—regardless of immigration status—have the right to access public education.

Protecting students from the harms of immigration enforcement is not only a matter of civil rights, but also of sound educational policy. Students cannot learn effectively when they are afraid, distracted, or absent from school. Teachers cannot teach effectively when classrooms are destabilized by trauma and uncertainty. Communities cannot thrive when children are denied consistent access to a quality education.

Contact: educationcaucusdph@gmail.com · 808-679-7454



Fujiwara & Rosenbaum, L.L.L.C.

1100 Alakea Street, FL 20, STE B

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

House Committee on Education

Date: Thursday, February 19, 2026, 2:00 pm, CR 309

Re: Fujiwara & Rosenbaum¹ Testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HB 2445, HD1 RELATING TO STUDENT SAFETY**

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

I. SUMMARY OF HB 2445, HD1

HB 2445, HD1 would add a new section to Chapter 302A of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes ("HRS") requiring the Department of Education ("DOE") to develop, adopt, and implement a standardized emergency response plan governing immigration enforcement activity occurring on or within one thousand feet of public school campuses during instructional hours or school-sponsored activities.

The emergency response plan must be designed to protect student safety and emotional well-being, minimize disruption to the educational environment, ensure compliance with applicable federal and state law, and provide clear guidance to school administrators and staff.

The bill's required components include:

- **Protocols for federal immigration enforcement presence**, including procedures for administrators approached by ICE officials, requirements that requests to access school grounds or student records be referred to designated DOE legal counsel, and guidance regarding warrants, subpoenas, and consent.
- **Student protection measures**, including procedures to ensure students are not questioned, detained, or removed from campus without appropriate legal authorization, prohibitions on school personnel assisting in immigration enforcement beyond what is legally required, and protocols to keep students supervised and safe at all times.
- **Parental and guardian communication**, including timely notification when immigration enforcement activity affects school operations and multilingual communication protocols where practicable.
- **Mandatory staff training** on the emergency response plan, including legal guidance, trauma-informed practices, and student de-escalation strategies.
- **Reporting to the Legislature** no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session on plan implementation, training conducted, and any findings or recommendations.

¹ Fujiwara & Rosenbaum, L.L.L.C. is a civil rights law firm originally established in 1986, dedicated to protecting the rights of workers and communities throughout the State of Hawai'i. Our firm has litigated cases involving race discrimination, national origin discrimination, disability discrimination, and police brutality.

The bill also extends protections to school-sponsored activities, events, and school buses and bus stops during periods when children are present. It protects personally identifiable student information in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). It explicitly provides that school personnel have no duty to determine a student's immigration status.

III. CIVIL RIGHTS IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. The Threat to Hawai'i's Children Is Real and Present

We are witnessing an alarming embrace of authoritarian practices by the current federal administration. The Trump administration is carrying out a full-on assault on a broad range of human rights, including efforts to intimidate, silence, and punish any opposition to abuses.

As of November 2025, the Trump administration is detaining 65,735 immigrants, the highest number of people detained by ICE in history. Of these detainees, 73.6% have no criminal convictions whatsoever. Many of those with convictions committed only minor offenses, including traffic violations. Migration is not a crime. Under U.S. law, being undocumented is a civil issue, not a criminal act.

Yet every day, people are being torn from their families and communities, arrested, locked behind bars, and denied their rights. The children of these families sit in Hawai'i's public school classrooms. **They deserve to learn without terror.**

B. Impact on Vulnerable Students

Hawai'i is home to large Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities that already face housing shortages, health inequities, and economic pressures. Our communities are close-knit and intergenerational, and schools often serve as vital community anchors. When fear or uncertainty enters school spaces, the effects extend well beyond the campus and into families and neighborhoods.

The fear is not hypothetical. As testified on February 6, 2026, by Izeah Almogla, a senior and Vice-President of Student Government at Waipahu High School: "At Waipahu High School, around 70% of our student population is Filipino. Many of my peers within this percentage are first-generation immigrants from the Philippines." This student told the Legislature directly: "Students should not be attending school in fear that immigration is going to walk through the doors and take them away. Establishing an efficient protocol provides students with the acknowledgement that schools care about their safety."

In Ka'ū on Hawai'i Island, large numbers of immigrant workers on coffee farms have children attending public schools. On other neighbor islands as well as on O'ahu, schools serve significant immigrant communities as well. These students have a constitutional right to a public education under both the federal Fourteenth Amendment²

² See **Plyler v. Doe**, 457 U.S. 202 (1982), where the U.S. Supreme Court held that the Equal Protection Clause of the federal Fourteenth Amendment prohibits states from denying undocumented children access to free public education.

and Article X, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution.³ The two work in tandem: federal equal protection bars discrimination based on immigration status, and Hawai'i's constitution independently guarantees the right to education. **Fear of immigration enforcement on campus directly chills the exercise of that right.**

C. Impact on Vulnerable Parents

The bill's parental notification and multilingual communication requirements address a population that is especially at risk: immigrant parents who may themselves be targets of enforcement. Parents who fear that picking up their child from school, attending a school event, or riding a school bus could result in arrest or deportation will withdraw from the educational community entirely. This harms not only the parents but the children who depend on parental engagement for educational success. HB 2445, HD1's extension of protections to school-sponsored events and school bus stops recognizes this reality.

D. The DOE's Existing "Guidance" Is Inadequate

The DOE claimed in its testimony on February 6, 2026, that this bill is unnecessary because, in March 2025, it issued law enforcement guidance that designates the principal or designee as the point of contact for law enforcement, includes a chain-of-command notification process, and provides counseling and behavioral health resources.

The question answers itself: if this guidance were working, the students would not be living in fear.

The DOE guidance suffers from several fatal deficiencies:

1. **It is internal guidance, not law.** Guidance can be changed, weakened, or ignored without legislative oversight. It carries no force of law and creates no enforceable obligations. A statute, by contrast, binds the DOE and provides accountability.
2. **It has not been communicated to those who need it most.** The DOE needs to make its plans very well-known and inform parents of the exact protocols it plans to follow. Parents and students report that they do not know what protections exist. Guidance that exists only on paper, unknown to the community it purports to protect, is no protection at all.
3. **It does not account for the reality of how ICE operates.** ICE is not the local police department. ICE acts as if there are no federal or Hawai'i state constitutional protections, much less state laws it needs to follow. The only direction ICE appears to listen to is the authoritarian Trump regime.

³ **Art. X, § 1.** The State shall provide for the establishment, support and control of a statewide system of public schools free from sectarian control, a state university, public libraries and such other educational institutions as may be deemed desirable, including physical facilities therefor. There shall be **no discrimination in public educational institutions because of race, religion, sex or ancestry**; . . . [Emphasis added].

ICE does not merely detain people. ICE kills people. On January 7, 2026, ICE agent Jonathan Ross shot and killed Renee Nicole Good, a 37-year-old U.S. citizen and mother of three young children, in Minneapolis. She had reportedly just dropped off her six-year-old child at school. Multiple bystander videos captured the shooting and the aftermath, which included ICE agents preventing a doctor from reaching Good to render aid. DHS Secretary Kristi Noem labeled Good a "domestic terrorist." The DOJ refused to open a civil rights investigation into her killing and instead investigated her widow.

Less than three weeks later, on January 24, 2026, Border Patrol agents Jesus Ochoa and Raymundo Gutierrez shot and killed Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old ICU nurse at a Veterans Affairs hospital, also in Minneapolis. Pretti had been filming ICE agents with his cellphone and stepped between an agent and a woman the agent had pushed to the ground. Agents pepper-sprayed him, wrestled him to the ground, and video evidence analyzed by CNN, the BBC, and the Associated Press appears to show an agent removing Pretti's legally carried firearm from his waistband before another agent shot him. At no point in any video can Pretti be seen wielding a weapon. The Trump administration initially called Pretti a "would-be assassin" and a "domestic terrorist," though no evidence supported that claim.

These are not isolated incidents. At least eight people died in connection with ICE operations in January 2026 alone, on top of 32 deaths in ICE custody in 2025, the highest number in over two decades. One detainee, Geraldo Lunas Campos, a 55-year-old Cuban father of four, was killed at Camp East Montana in El Paso, Texas. The El Paso County Medical Examiner ruled his death a homicide caused by "asphyxia due to neck and torso compression." A witness reported that guards handcuffed him and choked him until he was unconscious. DHS attempted to blame the death on a suicide attempt.

This is the agency that DOE guidance proposes to manage through a chain-of-command referral to the school principal. Internal DOE guidance addressed to school administrators is meaningless against a federal agency that shoots unarmed mothers outside schools, kills nurses exercising their First Amendment rights, and chokes handcuffed detainees to death in its own facilities. A paper protocol designed for cooperative law enforcement encounters was never designed to withstand this level of federal lawlessness. The Legislature must act because only the force of law can provide the accountability that DOE guidance cannot.

IV. LEGAL AND PRACTICAL CONCERNS: GAPS IN THE BILL

While we strongly support HB 2445, HD1, we identify the following provisions that should be strengthened:

A. Section (f): The Savings Clause Is Overbroad

Section (f) states: "Nothing in this section shall be construed to obstruct or interfere with lawful law enforcement activity conducted pursuant to valid legal authority." This language, while legally conventional, creates a loophole that could swallow the bill's protections. ICE routinely characterizes its enforcement actions as "lawful" even when conducted without judicial warrants, in violation of the Fourth Amendment, and in

contravention of its own sensitive locations policies. School administrators confronted with an aggressive ICE agent citing "valid legal authority" may feel compelled to defer entirely, rendering the emergency response plan inoperative at the precise moment it is most needed. We recommend amending Section (f) to specify that "valid legal authority" requires, at minimum, a judicial warrant signed by an Article III federal judge (not an administrative warrant issued by ICE itself).

B. Multilingual Communication: "Where Practicable" Is Too Weak

Section (c)(3)(B) requires multilingual communication protocols only "where practicable." In a state where public schools serve families speaking Tagalog, Ilocano, Samoan, Tongan, Marshallese, Chuukese, Japanese, Korean, and many other languages, multilingual communication is not a nicety. It is a civil rights necessity. Parents who cannot understand what is happening to their children on campus are denied meaningful access to the protections this bill creates. We recommend striking "where practicable" and replacing it with a mandate that communications be provided in the primary languages spoken by families at each school, consistent with existing Title VI obligations.

C. No Private Right of Action or Enforcement Mechanism

The bill creates obligations for the DOE but provides no remedy if the DOE fails to comply. There is no private right of action for students or families harmed by a failure to implement the emergency response plan. There is no penalty for noncompliance. We recommend adding an enforcement provision that allows students, parents, or guardians to bring a civil action for injunctive relief if the DOE fails to adopt, implement, or follow the required plan.

D. The Effective Date Must Be Changed

Section 4 sets the effective date as July 1, 3000. We understand this is a placeholder (defective date), but we urge the Committee to set a real and immediate effective date. Children are afraid now. The need is urgent. We recommend an effective date of July 1, 2026, or upon approval, whichever is earlier.

E. No Requirement for Legal Representation or Advocacy Resources

The bill requires trauma-informed training and counseling resources but does not require the DOE to provide students and families with access to legal representation or know-your-rights information when immigration enforcement occurs. In our experience litigating civil rights cases, the single most protective measure for vulnerable individuals in an enforcement encounter is access to legal counsel. We recommend adding a provision requiring the DOE to maintain and distribute current contact information for legal aid organizations and immigration attorneys available to provide emergency assistance.

V. POSITION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Fujiwara & Rosenbaum **strongly supports** HB 2445, HD1 and recommends passage with the following amendments:

1. **Amend Section (f)** on page 5 to define "valid legal authority" as requiring a judicial warrant signed by an Article III federal judge, explicitly excluding administrative warrants (ICE Forms I-200 and I-205).
2. **Amend Section (c)(3)(B)** on page 4 to remove "where practicable" and mandate multilingual communications in the primary languages represented at each school.
3. **Add an enforcement provision** creating a private right of action for injunctive relief for students, parents, or guardians when the DOE fails to adopt, implement, or follow the emergency response plan.
4. **Set a real effective date** of July 1, 2026, or upon approval.
5. **Add a legal resources provision** requiring the DOE to maintain and distribute contact information for legal aid organizations and immigration attorneys available for emergency assistance.
6. **Add a documentation prohibition** providing that no information gathered through operation of the emergency response plan may be shared with federal immigration authorities.

VI. CONCLUSION

Our firm has spent decades fighting for the civil rights of Hawai'i's people. We have seen what happens when government fails to protect the vulnerable: families are destroyed, communities are terrorized, and constitutional rights become meaningless words on paper.

HB 2445, HD1 is a necessary and overdue step. The DOE's existing March 2025 guidance has failed to quell the fear gripping our schoolchildren. That guidance exists on paper while ICE operates as though no law constrains it. A statute carries the force of law. It creates binding obligations. It provides the basis for accountability.

The children of Hawai'i, whether born here or brought here, whether citizens or immigrants, deserve to walk into their schools each morning without fear. They deserve to know that their State Legislature stood between them and an agency that has shown contempt for the rule of law. Pass HB 2445, HD1 with the recommended amendments. The urgency of this moment demands nothing less.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Elizabeth Jubin Fujiwara

Senior Partner

FUJIWARA & ROSENBAUM, LLLC



Committee: House Committee on Education
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 2:00 PM
Place: Conference Room 309 & via Videoconference
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of HB 2445
HD1 Relating to Student Safety

Dear Chair Justin H. Woodson, Vice Chair Trish La Chica, and members of the Committee on Education,

The ACLU of Hawai'i (ACLU-HI) is in **support of HB 2445 HD1**, which requires the Department of Education to develop, adopt, and implement a standardized emergency response plan for immigration enforcement activity occurring on or near public school campuses, including protocols for school administrators, student protection measures, family communications, and required staff training.

Our communities are stronger together—and instead, immigration enforcement is preventing our keiki from learning and growing into the next generation of leaders. The ACLU of Hawai'i consistently provides Know Your Rights trainings and hosted one specifically for educators. But without clear direction from the Department of Education, teachers, students, and staff are vulnerable to disruptive enforcement actions with no plan to respond or keep everyone involved safe.

HB2445 HD1 is therefore essential to ensuring that schools must remain safe and stable learning environments where students can focus on learning and families can engage without fear or confusion. A clear, statewide emergency response plan ensures consistent, lawful, and student-centered responses that prioritize safety and minimize disruption to instruction and school activities.

Just as importantly, HB2445 HD1 requires training and guidance so school staff understand appropriate procedures, legal limits, and trauma-informed, de-escalatory practices. This protects students' emotional wellbeing, supports clear communication with families, and gives school personnel the clarity they need to respond appropriately while respecting privacy and due process.

The ACLU of Hawai'i therefore respectfully requests that the Committee **PASS** HB2445 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Leilani Stacy
Immigrants' Rights Staff Attorney

With more than 4,000 Hawaii-based members, the mission of the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the United States and Hawai'i State Constitutions through legislative, litigation, and public education work. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving our communities in Hawai'i for over 60 years.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Rep. Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Tuesday, February 19, 2026 at 2:00 pm

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 309

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT - HB 2445, HD1, RELATING TO STUDENT SAFETY.

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, Rep. Amato from Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui. I am also an attorney licensed in the state of Hawaii for over 25 years and a founding coalition member of El Pueblo en Acción (EPA) Maui — The People in Action Maui. I am writing in **strong support of HB 2445, HD1**, Relating to Student Safety. House Bill 2445, HD1 requires the Department of Education to develop, establish, and implement a standardized emergency response plan governing immigration enforcement activity at or near public schools.

I currently volunteer as a Know Your Rights and constitutional protector trainer and educator statewide. I have helped train teachers and students, business owners and union members, faith leaders and health care providers, parents and senior citizens on what their constitutional rights are, that these rights apply to all within the United States regardless of citizenship status, and how to ensure these rights are not violated. I have also trained them how to prepare themselves, their staff, and their places of work, their schools and community service locations for interactions with federal agents.

I begin my training presentations with an overview of why knowing our rights is important:

- **AWARENESS:** Many people in our communities simply do not know their rights, so they also do not know when their rights are being violated. Federal agents can take advantage of our ignorance about our constitutional protections as a mechanism to deprive us of them.
- **EMPOWERMENT TO EXERCISE RIGHTS:** Know Your Rights education, in the school context for example, empowers people to be able to exercise their rights to protect themselves, their school, and their employees, students, and communities.
- **BUILD COLLECTIVE POWER:** The more people know their rights and how to exercise them, the more power they have when faced with immigration agents. Knowing your rights is the first step to collective safety.

I then move on to a slide of “Myth and Truth.” The myth is that immigration enforcement and mass deportation focuses on criminals, rapists, and people here “illegally.” What I have witnessed in person and what I have seen reported by credible sources (such as judicial orders), is that federal agents are:

- Detaining the spouses and parents of U.S. citizens, including respected Hawaii business owners, community leaders, and veterans.
- Arresting people at immigration court or check ins (if you are at immigration court or doing an immigration check in, you are going through the “legal” process).

- Ending “Temporary Protected Status” (DHS is trying to strip people here legally of their legal status. Fortunately the courts continue to block this as unlawful).
- Attempts to deport “unaccompanied minors” (children in the U.S. under the protection of the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Fortunately the courts have been able to block this as unlawful as well).

As a lawyer, when I witness federal agents repeatedly attempting to violate the constitutional rights of citizens and noncitizens alike, I find the rhetoric of our federal government describing immigrants as “illegals” ironic. Being in the United States in violation of immigration law is a civil infraction, it is not a crime. Violating the constitutional rights of people within the United States and defying court orders as our federal agents are doing is unlawful. The focus is on the wrong “illegals” these days.

My Know Your Rights trainings have expanded over the course of the last year to include a Prevention and Protection Plan, a process by which we take our understanding of our constitutional rights and engage with them practically in the real world to integrate them in our role as community leaders (school administrators, health care facilities, faith leaders) and into the spaces we lead so we can protect our students, patients, congregants, our friends and neighbors. Preparation for interactions with federal agents is a crucial skill so that communities are protected and rights are upheld. Our students, staff, friends and neighbors deserve our protection.

I **strongly support HB 2445, HD1** because I have real world experience as a responder in the aftermath of federal agents engaging in enforcement activity impacting schools. I have conducted rapidly convened training for staff at schools where federal agents have appeared looking for children and their families. I have heard the stories of teachers traumatized by federal agents coming to their home in the pre-dawn hours and subjecting them to questioning in their night clothes and blankets. At the request of school administrators I have facilitated virtual Know Your Rights training in Spanish for Spanish-speaking families of school children in communities traumatized by federal agents.

House Bill 2445, HD1 represents a necessary and positive step forward in enhancing school safety and preparing school administrators and staff to protect their communities from federal agents that are, unfortunately, often engaged in unconstitutional or unlawful activity. I ask for your **support of HB 2445, HD1**.

Warmest aloha,

Christine Andrews, JD
Wailuku, Maui

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 12:30:22 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joey Badua	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB2445 HD1 for a Standardized Emergency Response Plan for Immigration Enforcement Activity Near Schools

Chair Justin H. Woodson, Vice Chair Trish La Chica, and Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Joey Badua, and I am testifying in strong support of this measure. I grew up attending our public schools, and I know firsthand how important it is for students and families to feel that school is a safe, stable place to learn and grow.

Unfortunately, we've seen incidents across the country where immigration enforcement activity near school campuses has frightened students, disrupted learning, and sown fear among families. When this happens, teachers and administrators are often left to make high-stress decisions in real time, without clear policies or training to guide their response.

This bill addresses that gap by requiring the Department of Education to adopt a statewide emergency response plan that is clear, consistent, and student-centered. Just like how we have fire drills or school shooter drills, we should have something g that addresses a very real and traumatizing event for children. By setting standards for administrator protocols, staff training, and family communication, the measure ensures that every school can respond calmly, lawfully, and with compassion.

I especially support the required training in legal guidance, trauma-informed response, and de-escalation. These practical tools will help staff protect students' well-being while maintaining order. Including guidance for school events, buses, and bus stops also reflects the real situations where students can be vulnerable and deserve protection.

Schools should be places of learning, not fear. This bill strengthens that promise. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.

Respectfully,

Joey Badua

Honolulu, Hawai'i

February 5, 2026

**To: Representative Woodson, Chair
Representative La Chica, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Education
Re: SUPPORT for HB2445
Hearing: 02-19-2026, 2:00 PM**

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

I am writing in strong support of HB2445. My name is Mia Nishiguchi. I am a senior at Kalani High School, serving as the Hawai'i State Board of Education Student Member, and a member of the Hawai'i State Student Council. As a public school student born and raised in Hawai'i, I see firsthand how important it is for our campuses to remain places where students feel safe and supported, and can focus on learning. HB2445 would help ensure that a clear emergency response plan is established for immigration enforcement activity near or at schools.

From Sunday, February 1, to Tuesday, February 3, we held our annual Secondary Student Conference, bringing together 165 students from 34 public schools across our islands to become civically engaged by learning about the legislative process and debating bills from this legislative session. From this conference, HB2445 was voted the top bill, representing the greatest concern, current urgency, and priority for the students in attendance.

Throughout the debate, students emphasized that safety and stability are foundational to education. One delegate from the Central District shared, "Individuals who are immigrants face extreme fear in school." Having a transparent protocol in place would reassure students that educators and administrators are prepared, reducing anxiety and allowing classrooms to remain focused on instruction rather than uncertainty.

In California, chronic absenteeism has risen 22% due to concerns about local enforcement; HB2445 will help Hawai'i avoid similar outcomes by ensuring that families continue to trust schools as safe, nurturing environments for their children.

At Kalani High School, around 58% of our student body is Japanese. Many of my friends are first-generation immigrants from Japan, through our extensive exchange program partnerships. HB2445 would not only support local families but also preserve the safety of our relationships and life-long bonds of international partners who choose Hawai'i's Public Schools for cultural exchange and educational collaboration. HB2445 would affirm the vision of a public high school graduate who is both globally competitive and locally committed.

This bill is essential for the safety of our students, so I urge you to support HB2445.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Mia Nishiguchi

Kalani High School

Hawai'i State Student Council

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:41:32 PM

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

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

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB2445.

Mahalo,

Kanani Kai

Member Indivisible Hawaii.

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:05:45 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Caringer, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Ellen R. Caringer, Ph.D.

In SUPPORT of HB2445 HD1

Committee on Education

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 19, 2026

Dear Chair Justin H. Woodson, Vice Chair Trish La Chica, and members of the Committee on Education,

My name is Ellen R. Caringer, and I submit this testimony in support of HB2445 HD1, which requires the Department of Education to develop, adopt, and implement a standardized emergency response plan for immigration enforcement activity occurring on or near public school campuses, including protocols for school administrators, student protection measures, family communications, and required staff training.

I am a clinical psychologist and neuropsychologist, and I am testifying as an individual and have practiced in the state of Hawaii for 40 years on the islands of Oahu, Maui and Kauai. We are all aware of the terror that children have experienced in the school settings in Minnesota, when their school, or the environment around their school, became unsafe due to the actions of ICE. It is essential for the mental health of Hawaii's children, that we create safe spaces where they know they cannot be harmed or abducted. We must provide environments where students can focus on learning and families know their children will be protected. If immigration enforcement activity occurs at or near a school, educators and administrators should not have to improvise in a high-stress situation. A clear, statewide emergency response plan ensures consistent, lawful, and student-centered responses that prioritize safety and minimize disruption to instruction and school activities.

Just as importantly, HB2445 HD1 requires training and guidance so school staff understand appropriate procedures, legal limits, and trauma-informed, de-escalatory practices. This protects

students' emotional wellbeing, supports clear communication with families, and gives school personnel the clarity they need to respond appropriately while respecting privacy and due process.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee PASS HB2445 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Ellen R. Caringer, Ph.D.

drcaringer@gmail.com

808-281-7463

Testimony In SUPPORT of HB2445 HD1

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

Hearing Date: Feb 19, 2026

Dear Chair Justin H. Woodson, Vice Chair Trish La Chica, and members of the Committee on Education,

My name is Jeremiah Brown, I am a teacher at Waipahu High School. I am in strong support of HB2445 HD1, which requires the Department of Education to develop a clear emergency response plan for immigration enforcement activity at or near public schools.

ICE and Border Patrol have targeted schools for immigration enforcement, most recently in Minneapolis, and Chicago and Los Angeles before that. Agents have detained parents and children at pick-up and drop-off times, staked out areas close to schools, and have even used school property as staging locations. Teachers have worked with families to transport their children to and from school, to organize community patrols near schools, and have taken other measures to ensure student safety. In locations of aggressive immigration enforcement, students have stopped going to school out of fear. This is completely unacceptable and there is no reason to think it can't happen here in Hawai'i.

While the DOE has issued guidance on what to do when law enforcement enters a school campus, I feel it is short on specifics and requires contacting complex area superintendents who will probably be miles away from the location. It doesn't adequately address the very likely scenario of immigration enforcement agents operating near a school at drop-off or dismissal time. I believe that a more detailed and specific plan should be created and rolled out across the DOE, drawing on the experiences of other schools and districts who have already faced this threat to their school communities. I understand that the DOE will say they have no control over what happens near campuses. We also don't have total control over natural disasters, pandemics, or other emergencies, but we plan for them even if they happen off campus. We receive training for school shootings, but it's just as likely that armed immigration agents threaten our students' safety. When it starts happening here, like it has over and over again in other states, teachers will respond, and some guidance and support from the DOE would mean a lot.

Schools must be safe, stable places for students to learn. A standardized plan will give educators clear guidance, protect student safety and privacy, and reduce confusion and panic during emergencies so learning can continue and families can trust that schools are prepared.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to PASS HB2445 HD1.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Brown
Waialua, Oahu

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:18:22 PM

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

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

Comments:

I, Judith Mura strongly support HB2445 HD1

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:24:51 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please expedite passage of this bill to protect students as well as faculty, staff and families to ensure a safe, stable, predictable, lawful, student-centered learning environment in all Hawai'i public and public charter schools. Mahalo for including training for faculty-staff. Patti Cook - Waimea, Island of Hawai'i

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:01:02 PM

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

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

Comments:

Dear Legislature,

I write as retired Professor of Educational Psychology. I spent my 30-year career teaching practicing teachers, teachers-in-preparation, and other educational professionals about aspects of psychology necessary for teaching. Unfortunately, this training is necessary to keep ALL STUDENTS (not just those who might be targetted), teachers, and those working in school-related settings knowledgeable, protected and prepared.

Thank you

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:01:59 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Otaguro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Justin H. Woodson, Vice Chair Trish La Chica, and members of the Committee on Education,

My name is Lynn Otaguro and I submit this testimony in support of HB2445 HD1, which requires the Department of Education to develop, adopt, and implement a standardized emergency response plan for immigration enforcement activity occurring on or near public school campuses, including protocols for school administrators, student protection measures, family communications, and required staff training.

I am a former first grade teacher and understand the importance of keeping our schools safe for students and their families, and of having clear plans in place to ensure this safety.

HB2445 HD1 is important because it can help our schools remain as safe learning environments where students can focus on learning and families can engage without fear or confusion. If immigration enforcement activity occurs at or near a school, educators and administrators should not have to improvise in a high-stress situation. A clear, statewide emergency response plan ensures consistent, lawful, and student-centered responses that prioritize safety and minimize disruption to instruction and school activities.

HB2445 HD1 requires training and guidance so school staff understand appropriate procedures, legal limits, and trauma-informed, de-escalatory practices. This protects students' emotional wellbeing, supports clear communication with families, and gives school personnel the clarity they need to respond appropriately while respecting privacy and due process.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee PASS HB2445 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Lynn Otaguro

Oahu, Hawaii

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 8:41:01 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Cuthbert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for reading my testimony. I see the actions ordered by this bill as necessary in this time of stepped up federal immigration activity and I support it. Having said that, might the same rules instead be implemented by the Hawai'i state Board of Education without making another law?

Dave Cuthbert, Pahoa, Hawai'i

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 8:53:53 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Winternitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Elizabeth Winternitz

In SUPPORT of HB2445 HD1

Committee on Education

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 19, 2026

Dear Chair Justin H. Woodson, Vice Chair Trish La Chica, and members of the Committee on Education,

My name is Elizabeth Winternitz, and I submit this testimony in support of HB2445 HD1, which requires the Department of Education to develop, adopt, and implement a standardized emergency response plan for immigration enforcement activity occurring on or near public school campuses, including protocols for school administrators, student protection measures, family communications, and required staff training.

HB2445 HD1 is important because schools must remain safe and stable learning environments where students can focus on learning and families can engage without fear or confusion. If

immigration enforcement activity occurs at or near a school, educators and administrators should not have to improvise in a high-stress situation. A clear, statewide emergency response plan ensures consistent, lawful, and student-centered responses that prioritize safety and minimize disruption to instruction and school activities.

Just as importantly, HB2445 HD1 requires training and guidance so school staff understand appropriate procedures, legal limits, and trauma-informed, de-escalatory practices. This protects students' emotional wellbeing, supports clear communication with families, and gives school personnel the clarity they need to respond appropriately while respecting privacy and due process.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee PASS HB2445 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Winternitz

Kula, Maui

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 9:59:02 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Fulton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Due to my disability and personal constraints, I am unable to provide oral testimony and respectfully submit this written testimony **in support**.

The measure comes as **reported incidents in other states** have included immigration agents **following students off buses and approaching children to reach their parents**, contributing to fear and disruption in school communities. Hawai'i should act now to keep schools safe and focused on learning before this wave of terror arrives here.

House Bill 2445 (HD1) requires the Hawai'i Department of Education to adopt a **standard emergency response plan** for immigration enforcement at or near public schools — spelling out procedures, communication, and protections for students, families, and staff. Minimizing trauma for keiki and giving the staff tools to feel prepared.

**Testimony of Wendy Naomi Sodetani
In SUPPORT of HB2445 HD1**

Committee on Education

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 19, 2026

Dear Chair Justin H. Woodson, Vice Chair Trish La Chica, and members of the Committee on Education,

My name is **Wendy Naomi Sodetani**, and I submit this testimony to express my strong support of HB2445 HD1, which requires the Department of Education (DOE) to develop, adopt, and implement a standardized emergency response plan for immigration enforcement activity occurring on or near public school campuses, including protocols for school administrators, student protection measures, family communications, and required staff training.

I am testifying as an individual and an active member of the Indivisible Hawai'i Statewide Network (IHSN). I recently retired from a community health center in Kalihi serving primarily low-income, new immigrant and Pacific island migrant families.

Born and raised in Hawai'i, I have attended school through university. Never have I felt unsafe, nor imagined that any law enforcement agents could harass or abduct me at school or home. But this is the traumatizing reality that our children and their families face today.

I have been horrified to see news videos of students fleeing in sheer terror from federal agents that arrive at their school in unmarked cars, wearing masks and guns. This must not be allowed to happen here in Hawai'i. **We must protect the wellbeing of our precious keiki at all costs.**

HB2445 HD1 will **ensure that our schools are safe spaces of learning where young minds and spirits can be inspired and grow.** This measure is critically important because schools must remain safe and stable learning environments free of threats of violence and trauma. If schools cannot ensure safety, how can students focus on learning? How can teachers focus on teaching? How can families engage without fear or even allow their children to go to school? If immigration enforcement activity occurs at or near a school campus, educators and administrators should not have to "wing it" in a high-stress situation.

This bill requires the DOE to develop, adopt, and implement a standardized statewide emergency response plan for immigrant enforcement activity occurring on or within 1,000 feet of public school campuses during instructional hours or school-sponsored activities. HB2445 HD1 ensures

consistent, lawful, and student-centered responses that prioritize safety and minimize disruption to instruction and school activities.

HB2445 HD1 requires training and guidance so school staff understand appropriate procedures, legal limits, and trauma-informed, de-escalatory practices. This protects students' emotional and physical wellbeing, supports clear communication with families, and gives school personnel the clarity they need to respond appropriately while respecting privacy and due process.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee PASS HB2445 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Wendy Naomi Sodetani

Member of Indivisible Hawai'i Statewide Network (IHSN)

naomisodetani@gmail.com

(808) 741-0555

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 11:16:56 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This measure ensures DOE has a standardized response to keep students safe, calm, and accounted for—especially during confusing, fast-moving situations, such as if immigration enforcement activity occurs at or near campus. Please PASS HB2445HD1.

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 1:00:29 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
wilfredo tungol	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: HB2445 HD1

Aloha Chair and members of the House Education Committee,

I am a retired attorney and a product of our public schools. This bill is necessary given the times that we are living in. There has never been immigration enforcement concerns in our community and schools until now. Our children are vulnerable and they must be protected by the DOE teachers and/or staff. Most of you have witnessed what happened to the kindergarten child in Mineapollis who was detained by ICE. The look of fright on that child's eyes should be of concern to all of us and our students.

Please pass this bill.

Wilfredo Tungol

Pearl City, HI

HB-2445-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 12:53:39 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tina Even	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A two month old baby was denied medication while in an ICE detention center on the Mainland.
STOP LETTING ICE TAKE OUR CHILDREN only to deny them BASIC HUMANITY.

I support any action that will help prevent illegal ICE detainment.

- Tina Marie Even