



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

**Date:** 02/13/2026

**Time:** 08:30 AM

**Location:** 423 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** ECD

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** HB2534, HD1, RELATING TO ROBOTICS.

**Purpose of Bill:** Appropriates funds to the Department of Education to establish robotics as an interscholastic sport. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) agrees with the Legislature on the value of robotics education as outlined in HB 2534 H.D.1 but the Department cannot support the bill in its current form. However, the Department looks forward to working with the Legislature to find a way forward.

The Department recognizes the value of robotics education in providing students with meaningful, hands-on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning opportunities. Robotics programs support critical thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, and creativity, and have contributed to student engagement and success across the State.

In Hawai'i, interscholastic sports offerings are determined through league associations, which assess local conditions and determine whether a sport can be appropriately implemented across participating schools. Robotics programs currently operate in a variety of extracurricular and competitive formats across the State, with differences in scope, resources, staffing, and local capacity. Conditions are not uniform statewide, and implementation considerations vary by island, school, and community.

In reviewing how other states approach robotics as an interscholastic sport, the Texas University Interscholastic League classifies robotics under their Academic offerings for STEM, where as athletics is classified and operated separately from robotics. The Connecticut Association of Schools lists robotics as a high school program under student activities, and robotics is not a part of the high school athletic program. Thus, if robotics were to be established as a state interscholastic sport aligned to the STEM goals, there may be a need for an external agency to fulfill that role outside of the current established athletic high school sport league structure.

HB 2534 proposes establishing robotics as an interscholastic sport and appropriating funds for that purpose. Should robotics be established statewide as an interscholastic sport with athletics, the Department anticipates costs related to personnel, equipment,

competition operations, transportation, and administrative support. While robotics differs from traditional athletic programs, statewide implementation would require clear operational structures and sustainable resources to support equitable participation across schools. Therefore, robotics although shares characteristics as a sport with athletics noted in the bill, it should not be added as a sport to the athletic interscholastic leagues.

The Department would benefit from Sections 2 and 3 of this measure, which establish robotics as an interscholastic sport and appropriate funds for that purpose; however, given the fiscal constraints facing the State, the Department respectfully asks that funding instead be appropriated to priorities identified in its Board-approved budget.

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

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 11:35:15 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angela Young	CARES	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 9:32:17 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

2534 HB RELATING TO ROBOTICS.

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:20:28 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:30:44 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Collat	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I've been involved with FIRST Robotics in Hawai'i as a volunteer for 14 years. I do so not because I had a child in the program or because I'm a teacher. I've done it because these school robotics programs are absolutely amazing, and the students that participate in the are beyond impressive. They are the future innovators and problem-solvers who will not only solve our biggest challenges but will diversify Hawaii's economy. The robotics programs are super competitive, providing all the lessons of athletics (determination, hard work, perseverance, teamwork, character while under adversity, etc.) AND actual real-world skills applicable far beyond the field of play. It's been said that **robotics is the one sport where every kid can go pro**. That's why I've been involved for so long, why I organized our first-ever Robotics Signing Day last year to celebrate the graduating seniors headed to the engineering schools of their choice, and why I'm now the President of Hawai'i FIRST Robotics, the non-profit helping to bring these programs to our students across the state.

But for all the time I put into this, the teachers and coaches of the teams put in way more time. Since it's most often an after-school activity, they usually do so on a volunteer basis. That's not right. If they were to spend that same time helping a kid put a ball through a hoop, they'd be getting paid. **Robotics competitions are far more consequential**, and the educators who take on the extra effort that is so rewarding for our students--and our community--deserve some remuneration for this incredibly worthwhile sport!

Thanks for the opportunity to testify!

Michael Collat

President, Hawai'i FIRST Robotics

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 4:29:26 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Duffy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. This bill will provide students other options outside of traditional sports to be both competitive and physically involved in competitions. Not every student fits into football, basketball, or volleyball. Funding robotics as a sport is an investment in workforce readiness, academic achievement, and economic resilience. Totally support.

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 4:47:00 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Franklyn Donahue III	Jr Searider Robotics	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**MY NAME IS Franklyn Donahue III FROM DISTRICT Nanakuli-Waianae Complex. I AM REACHING OUT TO YOU TO HUMBLY REQUEST THAT YOUR COMMITTEE PASSES THE HB 2534. THIS BILL WILL ADDRESS IMPORTANT ISSUES REGARDING THE LACK OF FUNDING FOR ROBOTICS PROGRAMS. IT WILL CONTINUE TO PROTECT THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT ARE NECESSARY FOR SUSTAINING OUR LOCAL STEM INDUSTRIES. I SUPPORT THIS BILL BECAUSE THIS BILL SUPPORTS ME. SAY YES TO STEM!**

**I am currently the robotics coach for Waianae intermediate School, and have helped reboot the Waianae High School Robotics program with the help of my first set of kids who have no graduated and gone off to college. After those kids left, I helped Makaha Elementary start their program, which they have represented Hawai'i twice at Worlds in Texas.**

**Currently Waianae high and Makaha Elementary are no longer getting pay checks for their time with the kids, the programs that funded them have pulled out and went Aina route vs STEM.**

**Robotics has helped kids realize that theres more than just normal colleges in Hawai'i, they reached for the stars on the mainland, 2 have gone to engineering and programing adventures at Yale and California, others have stayed home and helped volunteer as referee's, also not getting paid for this position.**

**Robotics has been ran by volunteers for years, but we cant keep the good volunteers (Emcess's, Judge Advisors etc) because of the workload those jobs enlist of them and no compensation from any Event Planner.**

**Please help us say yes to STEM to let kids see theres more to life than just sports.**

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 8:42:32 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brayden Masumoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Brayden Masumoto, and I'm a freshman from Campbell High School. Sports was never really my thing, and I really wanted to do something that technically challenged and got me out in the community. Robotics was perhaps the greatest decision I have ever made, joining the club from elementary all the way to the present taught me so much. Getting out my very shy shell made me learn so much about myself, the creativity made me proud, mechanical knowledge, best friends, and even the amount of unexpected travel I have been lucky enough to go on! I do remember the highs and lows that grown me into a better person, this passion connects and applies people with unique creativity. This bill HB2534, sounds like an amazing opportunity to further fuel the passion amongst this club that normally doesn't get in the spotlight. Robotics can change a person's life the same as any sport, I feel a better person with good friends. I want to represent James Campbell High school proudly amongst the hardworking people who dedicate themselves to this amazing STEAM program at the top of this field. I support this bill as a longtime robotics member, I feel we deserve the same attention and funding as any other respectable sport. Thank you for reading my testimony, and I hope you consider this bill!

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 9:48:02 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aleizay Rose Angel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Aleizay Angel from District 9, and I am the Team Captain of Maui High School Robotics. I am writing in strong support of House Bill 2534, which addresses the critical lack of funding for robotics programs in Hawaii.

Robotics has taught me leadership, problem-solving, and real engineering skills I will use in my future career in biomedical engineering. However, our program faces significant financial challenges. As a Hawaii-based team, we encounter unique costs including robot shipping, airfare, and competition expenses exceeding \$25,000 per year. Due to cutbacks in federal and state funding, we struggle to ensure all our students can participate.

Beyond our own team, we organize the Maui VEX IQ League, bringing robotics opportunities to elementary and middle school students across the island. Many of these students do not have access to advanced STEM programs or mentors who can show them what engineering careers look like. House Bill 2534 will protect the educational programs necessary for Hawaii's STEM future and help us continue inspiring the next generation.

I humbly request that your committee passes HB 2534. This bill supports students like me and the hundreds of young learners we mentor across Maui. Thank you for your consideration.

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 9:53:41 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mario Rellez-Carone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Mario Rellez-Carone from State House District 9 and State Senate District 5 of Maui, Hawaii. I am reaching out to you to humbly request that your committee passes the HB 2534. This bill will address important issues regarding the lack of funding for our robotics programs. It will continue to protect the educational programs that are necessary for sustaining our local STEM industries. I support this bill because this bill supports me. Say Yes to STEM!

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:19:45 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ahron Natividad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Ahron Natividad, and I am writing in support of HB 2534. Being part of robotics for even just one school year taught me a lot about failures, teamwork, strategies, problem-solving, and competition, all of which share identical traits developed in traditional athletic sports. Having robotics recognized as an interscholastic sport can be a game-changer, as it could bring students' ideas directly into the spotlight, giving everyone a fair shot to contribute, innovate, and most of all, gain lifelong connections and industry skills needed in a fast-changing, competitive workforce in STEM. I strongly urge the committee to please pass HB 2534 to support the next generation of Hawai'i's leaders. Say YES to STEM!

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:35:32 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anya Grande	James Campbell High School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Anya Grande and I am the 3D online designer for Saber Dynamics robotics team at James Campbell High Schools. I support HB 2534 because it would greatly support our robotics team and robotics teams in general. I started robotics in sixth grade and have acquired many skills throughout my journey. It builds communication and networking, puts you into problem solving situations, and prepares you for professional environments. Robotics as a sport would raise much funding for our teams, greatly supporting the students working towards improving their skills. Funding for robotics would specifically help with transportation and materials. Thank you very much for your time!

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:48:57 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Torin Williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Torin and I'm from the Leeward District. I am reaching out to you to humbly request that your committee pass the HB 2524. This bill will address glaring issues of the lack of funding to robotics programs. It will also as well continue to protect educational programs necessary to sustain our local STEM industries. I support this bill because it supports me, please say yes to STEM.

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 11:59:44 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Justin Paeste	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Justin Paeste from the district of Waipahu. I am reaching out to you to humbly request that your committee passes the HB 2534. This bill will address important issues regarding the lack of funding for robotics programs across the state of Hawai'i. As an alumni of the FRC Team 2896 The MechaMonarchs of Damien Memorial School, and currently a rising physician, I am a living testament of what robotics programs can help achieve. Beyond science, technology, engineering, and math, robotics offers exciting opportunities and experiences to meet other like minded individuals from around the world and instill a sense of fellowship and cooperation, a term coined from FIRST, that embodies the spirit of competing while assisting and enabling others whenever possible. My experience from robotics in highschool helped to shape me into a compassionate and competent physician ready to care for the people of Hawai'i. With this bill we have the opportunity to inspire and support the future generation of physicians, scientists, engineers and just about anything. The beauty of robotics programs is that it is not just for students inclined towards STEM but for everyone as it is truly a sport that is multifaceted and seeks to utilize everyone's unique skill and gift. Robotics offers a platform for all to grow and foster in themselves skills that will contribute to their future. I support this bill because I support the future of Hawai'i. Say yes to STEM.

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 12:51:35 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kayla Kobayashi	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

My name is Kayla from District 41. I am reaching out to humbly request that your committee passes the HB 2534. This bill will address important issues regarding the lack of funding for robotics programs. Many programs are unable to support themselves financially and are forced to shut down. However, this bill will help counteract these financial barriers and it will continue to protect the educational programs that are necessary for sustaining our local STEM industries. I support this bill because it supports me. Say yes to STEM!

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 1:06:30 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joshua Tom	Saber Dynamics	Support	In Person

Comments:

The Saber Dynamics Robotics team (8871), recognizes the need for STEM programs in the State and how scholastic robotics is a crucial stepping stone to grow industry here in Hawaii.

A majority of students graduating from these programs end up attending a four-year university or a skilled trade school. Coming from the Saber Dynamics program, we have a 100% college attendance rate from our alumni, attending schools such as Rice University, Washington State University, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

However, in order to keep our brilliant minds here in Hawaii, we must continue to educate our keiki and provide them with resources every step of the way. We have noticed with the elementary students Saber Dynamics has mentored, once they enter our Ilima Intermediate school, they lose these fundamental programs, causing them to also lose the passion, dedication, and experience, and we see a sharp decline in Ilima students who participate in robotics/engineering/STEM fields post high school or secondary school.

Supporting these programs by recognizing them as interscholastic sports opens the doorway to students from across the state to compete in one of the fastest growing industries in the world. It will help build and maintain teams in schools where access to these programs are limited or nonexistent, especially the schools under threat of losing their programs (Nanakuli and McKinley High School). We need to give our keiki the competitive advantage, or allow them to be overshadowed by foreign contract workers, who have zero respect for our aina or way of life.

Robotics as a sport also aligns with the several collegiate programs being developed under the UH systems. The mechatronics lab at LCC is looking to expand its resources, so providing students the opportunity to garner experience in education in their k-12 schooling will create an educational pipeline.

These programs are vital to fighting off the brain drain present here in Hawaii. By supporting robotics as a sport, the committee supports the future of technology here in Hawaii.

Mahalo

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 7:30:33 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kenzi Yuen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! My name is Kenzi Yuen, and I am a constituent of District 18. We are from Hahaione Elementary Hawks 38603A, a robotics team based in Hawaii Kai at Hahaione Elementary School. I am writing to urge you to support and sign onto the house bill 2534.

Robotics plays a crucial part in life because it helps with teamwork, creative ideas and teaches kids all about the engineering process. Not all kids like playing sports like football, soccer and basketball, but robotics can teach them teamwork and sportsmanship just like a regular sport. The engineering notebook is an important part of robotics as well and it can also help kids with their writing skills. Kids are the future of Hawaii and technology is developing fast so we want to prepare them for the future.

Personally, I have learned a lot from robotics and hope to continue my journey in robotics. I am not a sporty person but I still learned what it means to be a team player and I believe it can help other kids too. Coding is another big thing in robotics and it helps us understand things in our daily lives. For example, I used to not think about how phones, ipads and computers work but now I know behind every device is a program that is used everyday.

I ask for your consideration of the bill and I hope you understand how important it is to kids in Hawaii.

Thank you for reading!

Kenzi Yuen

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 7:42:11 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charlie Migue	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Charlie Ruben Miguel from 'Ewa, and I go to James Campbell High School and I'm apart of the school's robotics team, Saber Dynamics, as a coder. I'm here writing my testimony in support of the HB 2534 being passed by the committee. My reasoning of why I'm supporting this is to address the issue of lack of funding for robotic teams. As myself, I have been in robotics since the 7th grade and started to compete in competitions in the 8th to now. Robotics taught me value lessons like giving me a chance to learn more about coding and has increased my passion for it immensely. I hope this bill will support and give a chance for robotic teams all over the island and myself to continue what we are doing!

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 8:16:57 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Danielle Nicole Coloma	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

My name is Danielle Nicole Coloma from District 41. I am reaching out to you to humbly request that your committee passes the HB 2534. This bill will address important issues regarding the lack of funding for robotics programs. It will continue to protect the educational programs that are necessary for sustaining our local STEM industries. I support this bill because this bill supports me. Say yes to STEM!

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 9:24:52 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
P Chan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to HB 2534.

Robotics has long been recognized as an academic discipline that integrates engineering, computer science, mathematics, and applied problem-solving. At colleges and universities, robotics is embedded within formal academic curricula and, in many cases, offered as undergraduate and graduate fields of study. At the K–12 level, robotics similarly provides rigorous, standards-aligned learning experiences that develop technical knowledge, computational thinking, and collaborative skills. Because robotics prepares students for high-tech STEM careers and supports workforce development goals, it should be treated as an academic and Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway rather than outside the instructional framework.

Competitive robotics programs are not governed by a single governing body. Instead, multiple established organizations oversee different programs, each with its own set of rules, standards, and competition structures. Reframing robotics as an interscholastic sport could create regulatory and oversight challenges.

From experience in robotics education, I have seen the meaningful impact that both classroom and competition-integrated robotics programs have on student achievement, higher education pathways, and career readiness. Strong programs depend not only on extracurricular competition teams, but also on well-supported instruction delivered by educators with appropriate training and curriculum resources.

Any funding or policy approach should carefully consider how to support robotics comprehensively, including classroom educators, training, workshops, professional development, kits and materials, etc., to ensure that students receive consistent, high-quality instruction.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to reconsider HB 2534 in its current form.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 11:51:30 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Taryn Miyasato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Taryn Miyasato from the Ewa District. I am reaching out to you to humbly request that your committee passes the HB 2534. This bill will address important issues regarding the lack of funding for robotics programs. It will continue to protect the educational programs that are necessary for sustaining our local STEM industries. I support this bill because this bill supports me. Say yes to STEM!

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 12:41:50 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 12:58:28 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katie Ta	Kalani HS Robotics - Team Magma 3008	Support	In Person

Comments:

My name is Katie Ta from District 4. I'm currently a junior attending Kalani High School and am one of the captains of our robotics team. My team is known in the community for our support of STEM extracurriculars for younger students. However, we could not do this without large efforts to get funding from private organizations. Our students work hard in learning the process of grant writing, sponsorship retainment, and fundraising. Not all teams have this pre-established foundation of experienced students and mentors. To make STEM more accessible for all Hawai'i youth, I am reaching out to you to humbly request that your committee passes the HB 2534. This bill will address significant disparities regarding the lack of funding for robotics programs. It will continue to protect the educational programs that are necessary for sustaining our local STEM industries and workforce. I support this bill because it supports me, the youth of Hawai'i, and our future. Say YES to STEM.

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 3:52:09 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacqueline Beckman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislature,

I strongly support appropriating funds to the Department of Education to establish robotics as an interscholastic sport. Robotics at Waianae Intermediate School where I teach has been a beneficial program that engages students to excel locally and nationally. We need to recognize robotics as an interscholastic sport as well.

Mahalo,

Jacqueline Beckman

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 8:42:59 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ei Tait	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Ei Tait and I am a high school senior student from District 41. For all four of my high school years I have attended James Campbell High School and have been a part of their robotics team—Saber Dynamics—which I'm currently the president of. Moving to Hawaii from where I'd spent all of my prior years meant giving up the people that had always been there, settling into a completely foreign place.

I was lucky enough to have the chance to join my elementary school's robotics team—where I found friends for the first time since moving. When the time came to join my middle school team, I was thoroughly disappointed to find out that one didn't exist. For the next three years such a team did not exist, a gap that left a larger impression than I could've imagined.

Going into high school I didn't really know what I wanted to do. As a result of the lack of engineering experience throughout my middle school years, I was filed into the computer science pathway. It wasn't until halfway through my freshman year that I realized Campbell had a robotics team—something I joined instantly.

Saber Dynamics has been one of the best things to happen in my life. Since I joined, my passion for engineering was rekindled—and I've even been accepted into the college of my dreams to pursue mechanical engineering roboticism. My team is my favorite group of people, despite the fact that we're all wildly different. Though I am a naturally quiet person I find myself never shutting up around them. So many things that make up who I am today, not to mention my academic career, have been facilitated through my involvement in robotics.

I believe that it's extremely important to plant a seed as early as possible—no matter how long it may take to germinate. Monthly we hold a program in which kids from all over Ewa show up and we teach them something related to engineering. More than half of the kids we host don't currently have access to a robotics team—the very same kids that I've seen light up at the mere mention of a hands-on activity. They deserve the opportunity to explore their educational interests—something that shouldn't be stopped because a school can't afford funding for robotics.

To make STEM and engineering in general more accessible for all children in Hawaii I am in support of this bill. I humbly request that HB2534 is passed, in order to protect and create the programs essential to mold the next generation should they decide they wish to follow that path.



**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 10:05:24 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Colin Yeo	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I am in support of this bill because I think that robotics is very much a sport and requires equal funding if not more funding than a normal sport.

I run Cross Country and that is a both physically intensive and mentally intensive sport. Never have I experience a need for stronger mental endurance than the long days that we spend working on our robot. Robotics is not something that we think of as physically intensive when we first hear it. But thats not true, especially for highschool robotics. I am a welder on my team and a machinest both of which are physically instensive jobs. Whether it is enduring the hot melting metal 2 feet away from your face or lifting the 30 lbs of metal that is going to be machined it is a physically exerting task and is no different than what a normal machinest or welder experiences in the work force. Except im in Highschool, I do this after going to school and attending classes for hours.

Similarly coaches/mentors have this issue to. This is not their job, its a thing they do as a volenteer and out of the goodness of their heart.

Please support this bill because I belive that this is something than can secure the future of those who come after me.

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 10:34:01 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Natalie Teruya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. My son is an 11th grader on the Windward side of Oahu. He has been participating in robotics since the 4th grade. It has given him the opportunity to work with others as a team, given him opportunities to lead his peers, and allowed him to compete on a national stage. He has honed the skills to build a robot, but also learned how to interact with his peers and adults, from the islands, but also from around the world.

As the bill indicates, robotics also contributes to our State economy. Just to name a few things, the FIRST Robotics Regional Competition brings teams from all around the world. And a local company, Kauai Labs, exports complex gyroscopes from Kauai to wherever robots are created.

But, I can honestly say that it's not easy to create and build a new team. It takes a lot of money and time to get your peers interested, to find mentors that are willing to give so much time, and of course the money it takes to order parts to build these amazingly complex pieces of machinery. It's difficult to do it once, and even more difficult to continue to build interest and sustain the teams from year to year.

It is unfortunate that the lack of funding is threatening all the progress that the robotics community has made in the past decades. The opportunities that these programs bring to our children will change their lives forever. I support this bill because I believe the progress, the opportunities, the community, the mentors and the students are all worth supporting and preserving.

**HB-2534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 10:57:14 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jaxson Slotnick-Paige	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Jaxson Slotnick-Paige and I am in support of bill HB2534 and its efforts to establish robotics as an interscholastic sport. I have participated in robotics programs since I was in second grade, and now in eleventh grade I am a co-team captain for FIRST robotics team 9019 Koolaupoko. Robotics has undoubtedly been the most impactful part of my academic life. It has led me to persue a career in software development and given me both the leadership and terchnical skills required to begin impacting our local community now, through the numerous community outreach events put on by local robotics teams. In my time have I seen countless students, much like myself, disscover their passion for STEM through the medium of robotics. We are future engineers, inovators, and leaders. The main limitiations we have faced in expanding our even just maintaining our impact is lack of consistant funding and mentors. This bill goes goes a long way to address this, and frankly I can think of no other program more deserving of additional funding.

I would like to thank the committee for this oportunity to testify.

Jaxson Slotnick-Paige

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