

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



MAKALAPUA ALENCASTRE, ED. D.
CHAIRPERSON

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

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FOR: HB 2564 RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS
DATE: February 17, 2026
TIME: 2:00 P.M.
COMMITTEE: Committee on Education
ROOM: Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
FROM: Ed H. Noh, Ed. D., Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission ("Commission") appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 2564** which provides funding to the Commission for distribution to public charter schools, based on the facilities funding working group report, for infrastructure costs, the rental or lease of charter school facilities, and the repair and maintenance of network infrastructure for charter schools.

Facilities for public charter schools continue to be an ongoing challenge that directly affects charter school budgets and indirectly impacts their capacity to implement the full breadth of their instructional program for their students. The use of the facilities funding working group report to prioritize funding provides a clear basis and rationale for distribution as it incorporated input and guidance from the Commission and charter school representatives, the Superintendent, and cabinet level members of the executive branch.

Support for facilities funding has been one of the Commission's Standing Advocacy principles. The Commission stands ready to work with the Legislature on the implementation of this measure to resolve the long-standing challenge of the lack of facilities funding for charter schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2564
RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Ho‘ona‘auao
(House Committee on Education)

Ke Kapitala ‘o Hawai‘i
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

Pepeluali 17, 2026

2:00PM

Lumi 309

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

The leadership of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs **STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB2564** which will provide the Hawai‘i Public Charter School Commission (Commission) with much needed funding for charter school facilities.

OHA's Interest and Investments in Charter Schools

Of the 37 charter schools statewide, 17 are Hawaiian culture-based or Hawaiian language immersion schools. These public charter schools are funded on a per-pupil basis, however, in addition to using these funds to pay for direct education costs, such as teachers' salaries, they must use these funds to pay for facilities as well. OHA has historically provided funding to Hawaiian culture-based or Hawaiian language charter schools to help close funding gaps. Most recently, for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, OHA invested \$6.88 million into Hawaiian-focused charter schools to address funding inequities.¹ This bill is a welcomed and overdue interim solution to the longstanding funding inequities for charter school facilities.

Equitable Funding for Charter Schools is Long Overdue

Facility funding shortcomings in the public charter school system have been an issue for a number of years. In 2015, the State Legislature along with the State Public

¹ Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2025 Annual Report, https://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/2025annualreport_WEB.pdf (last accessed on 2/10/2026).

Charter School Commission worked to address the shortcomings with the creation of the Charter School Facilities Funding Working Group (Working Group). However, the Working Group's recommendations have yet to be implemented.

Unlike DOE schools with their own facilities and dedicated facilities support, many start-up public charter schools have been forced to use a significant amount of their per-pupil funding to pay rent and maintenance costs for classrooms and other facilities. Further, many charter schools have no other choice but to use temporary structures such as tents that do not provide optimal learning environments in the heat. With increasing demand for Hawaiian medium education – for both kaiapuni and charter schools – many charter schools have also outgrown their facilities prompting the need for additional or larger capacity facilities.

HB2564 Will Provide Charter Schools with Appropriate Support for Facilities

In 2019, the Working Group provided a framework to prioritize distribution of facilities funding among schools based on specific criteria such as prior funding, condition of existing facilities, and benefits to the surrounding community including reducing overcrowding. This bill is needed to effectuate the Working Group's findings, allowing appropriate funding to be distributed to charter schools for facilities. OHA also appreciates the versatility provided in the bill language for the funding to be used for rent, lease, repairs, and maintenance as these are realities will provide appropriate support to charter schools.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue. Please note this testimony represents a recommendation by OHA leadership that is subject to full Board approval.

HB-2564

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 12:42:34 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monica Morris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I strongly support this bill. Thank you for holding a hearing on this important measure.

Aloha, Monica Morris

Honolulu, Hawaii

HB-2564

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 2:12:20 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Poiani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 2564 relating to Charter Schools.

I am the parent of three children who have attended charter schools, and I have seen firsthand both the value they provide and the challenges they face. One of the most significant challenges is facility funding. Many charter schools struggle to secure and maintain safe, adequate, and well-equipped learning environments due to limited access to public facility resources.

Charter schools play an important role in Hawaii’s public education system. They offer alternative educational models, missions, and instructional approaches that differ from traditional public schools. This diversity allows families to choose learning environments that best reflect their educational values and meet the unique needs of their children. It also encourages innovation within public education, helping refine and improve teaching models across the system.

All Hawaii students—regardless of the type of public school they attend—deserve access to well-maintained, safe, and high-quality facilities. Supporting equitable facility funding for charter schools helps ensure that every student has an environment conducive to learning and success.

HB-2564

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 8:18:14 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

2564 HB RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS.

HB-2564

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:51:26 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I KĀKO‘O this bill. Charter schools have been operating with less money per pupil than their regular DOE counterparts and it is time that the state provide funding for facilities. The largest expenses for charter schools are facilities and faculty/staff salaries. If the charter schools were provided with similar resources then more money could be spent on the actual education portion of the students.

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

HB-2564

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:48:45 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Acasio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica and Members for the House Committee on Education,

SUPPORT HB 2564 - Relating to Charter Schools

I am writing to you today in my personal capacity as a constituent and parent of charter school students and I ask that you please support HB 2564. Hawaii Public Charter Schools are severely underfunded especially in the area of facilities and yet they provide a huge service to our communities and the State. This is a step in the right direction.

Thank you for your consideration,

Laura Acasio

HB-2564

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:48:04 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Mandado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure. If charter schools can alleviate some of their facilities costs, more money can be spent on student needs and programming.