



MANPOWER AND  
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**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR**  
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

February 11, 2026

Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair  
Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair  
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair  
Committee on Education

Hawai'i State Senate  
415 S Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: Senate Bill 2614 (Relating to education.)**

Dear Honorable Chairs Fukunaga and Kim, Honorable Vice Chairs Lee and Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Defense, I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 2614. This measure would reinstate past Hawai'i Department of Education policy to honor the sacrifices of individuals whose high school education in Hawai'i was interrupted by their service in the United States Armed Forces during specified times of war.

Many residents of Hawai'i answered our nation's call to service before they had the opportunity to earn their high school diploma. The provisions included within this measure reestablishes a mechanism for the State to award a diploma to these veterans, formally acknowledging an educational milestone that was sacrificed due to their service.

We thank the Committee for considering this measure and are especially grateful for the tremendous effort Hawai'i continues to make in support of service members and their families, no matter when they served.

Sincerely,

Kelli May Douglas  
Defense-State Liaison Office  
Pacific Southwest Region



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

**Date:** 02/13/2026

**Time:** 03:02 PM

**Location:** CR 016 & Videoconference

**Committee:** EDU/PSM

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** SB2614, RELATING TO EDUCATION.

**Purpose of Bill:** Authorizes the Department of Education to award a high school diploma to qualified persons who did not receive a high school diploma as a result of compulsory or voluntary induction into the Armed Services of the United States or whose high school education was interrupted due to wartime practices during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) supports SB2614, which authorizes the Department to award high school diplomas to individuals who did not receive a diploma due to military service and individuals whose high school education was interrupted due to wartime practices during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War.

Act 101, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2007, which previously authorized the Department to issue the Kupono diploma to World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans, as well as individuals whose schooling was interrupted due to military service or internment, sunset in 2020. The Department would appreciate authorization to resume awarding high school diplomas to the individuals outlined in this bill in recognition of their sacrifices during wartime.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB2614.

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



**STEPHEN F. LOGAN**  
MAJOR GENERAL  
ADJUTANT GENERAL  
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

**JOHN P. ALAMODIN**  
LIEUTENANT COLONEL  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAI'I  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA**  
**OFFICE OF VETERANS' SERVICES**  
459 PATTERSON ROAD, E-WING, ROOM 1-A103  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819-1522  
Telephone Number (808) 433-0420

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL  
RELATING TO EDUCATION

BEFORE THE COMMITTEES ON  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS AND  
EDUCATION

BY

JOHN P. ALAMODIN  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

FEBRUARY 13, 2026

Aloha Chairs Fukunaga and Mercado Kim, Vice-Chairs Lee and Kidani, and members of the committees:

I am John P. Alamodin, Director, Office of Veterans Services, State of Hawaii, Department of Defense

The Office of Veterans Services (OVS) provides written testimony in **SUPPORT** of SB 2614.

This measure seeks to authorize the Department of Education to award a high school diploma to qualified persons who did not receive a high school diploma as a result of compulsory or voluntary induction into the armed services of the United States or whose high school education was interrupted due to wartime practices during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War.

In 1940, Congress enacted the Selective Training and Service Act. All males between the ages of 21 and 35 were ordered to register for the draft and the first national lottery is held. As World War II progressed, the draft age was lowered to 18 and men were called to service not by lottery number but by age, with the oldest going first. In 1941,

following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Congress gave the President power to send draftees anywhere in the world, removing the distinctions between draftees, Active Duty, National Guardsmen and Reservists, and creating one army made up of all. In 1947, President Harry S. Truman recommended to Congress that the 1940 Selective Training and Service Act expire and that the level of required military forces be maintained by means of voluntary enlistments. In 1950, the Korean War draft called up men between the ages of eighteen-and-a-half and 35 for terms of duty averaging two years. In 1951, the Universal Military Training and Service Act was passed, requiring males between 18 and 26 to register. In 1952, Congress enacted the Reserve Forces Act, compelling every man who is drafted or enlisted to an eight-year obligation to military service. After a term of active duty is completed, one is assigned to standby reserve and can be called back to active duty upon a declaration of war or national emergency. In 1969, President Nixon orders the "19-year-old draft" stating if a young man is not drafted at age 19, he will be exempt from future military service except in the event of war or national emergency. Deferrals are allowed for hardship cases, certain occupations, conscientious objectors, clergymen, and high school and college students. One year later Nixon will argue in favor of ending student deferments. In 1969, President Nixon orders a "random selection" lottery system for selecting men to serve in the war in Vietnam, changing the previous system of drafting according to age. In 1973, the 1967 Selective Service Act, extended through an act of Congress in 1971, expired, ending the authority to induct draft registrants.

Data through a limited literature review would note there were 4,336 residents of the Hawaiian Islands drafted in the United States military during the First World War (September 1917-November 1918) and 32,197 residents drafted during the Second World War (November 1940-October 1946). There are no statistics available as to the number of Hawai'i's residents drafted during the Korean War (June 1950-June 1953) and the Vietnam War (August 1964-February 1973), but there were over 25,000 of Hawai'i's residents who served during the Korean War and 13,000 of Hawai'i's residents who served during the Vietnam War.

Summarily, we support efforts to honor those who sacrificed and served to defend and to protect our country and allies. We support the program described in this measure to provide service members in the identified wartime eras who had their high school education interrupted to be awarded their diploma.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

John P. Alamodin, [john.p.alamodin@hawaii.gov](mailto:john.p.alamodin@hawaii.gov)



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2614  
RELATING TO EDUCATION**

Senate Committee on Education  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Public Safety & Military Affairs  
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair  
Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair

Friday, February 13, 2026 at 3:02 PM  
Conference Room 016 or via Videoconference

Chairs Kim and Fukunaga, Vice Chairs Kidani and Lee, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii Military Affairs Council ("MAC") supports SB 2614.

The MAC was established in 1985 when the Chamber was appointed by the State to serve as the liaison to the military. The MAC advocates on behalf of Hawaii's military, and is comprised of business leaders, academic institutions, State and County officials, members of the CODEL, community leaders, labor unions and organizations and retired U.S. flag and general officers. The MAC works to support Hawaii's location as a strategic U.S. headquarters in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region which is crucial for U.S. national and homeland security.

This measure honors veterans and affected community members by formally recognizing the sacrifices they made in service to the nation at the expense of completing their secondary education.

The gesture is modest in fiscal and administrative terms, but it carries real symbolic weight for veterans and their families: it validates their sacrifice, restores a measure of dignity and completeness to their life stories, and publicly affirms that the State values both their service and their interrupted educational aspirations.

For these reasons, the Hawaii Military Affairs Council respectfully urges passage of SB 2614. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**Testimony in Support of SB 2614**  
**Authorizing the Department of Education to Establish a Program for Awarding High School Diplomas to Veterans and Those Affected by Wartime Practices**

Dear Chair C. Fukunaga, C. Lee, Chair D. Mercado Kim, Chair M. Kidani, and Members of the Committee on Public Safety, Military Affairs and Education,

I am honored to provide testimony in support of **SB 2614**, which seeks to reauthorize the Department of Education's ***Kūpono Diploma Program***. This vital program offers honorary high school diplomas to Hawai'i residents who were unable to complete their high school education due to: their voluntary or compulsory induction into the armed services or the traumatic impacts of wartime practices during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War; or due to internment in relocation camps during World War II.

The original bill, Act 101, was passed in 2007 and co-sponsored by former State Senator Norman Sakamoto, and the late State Representative and U.S. Congressman, K. Mark Takai. The measure was supported by the *Hawai'i Joint Venture Education Forum*, a partnership founded in 1999 by the late U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye, which remains active today. This collaboration unites Hawai'i's military services, public schools, and community stakeholders in a shared mission of supporting public schools and keiki.

The sacrifices made by our kūpuna, particularly those who served during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, are profound. Many of these brave individuals, now senior citizens, faced the heartbreaking reality of having to pause or forgo their high school education to serve our country. This honorary diploma represents far more than just a certificate; it is a symbol of the recognition and dignity they so richly deserve. For many, it opened doors to employment opportunities, provided a sense of personal fulfillment, and restored a feeling of completeness in their educational journey. It serves as a heartfelt reminder that their courage and sacrifices have not gone unnoticed.

Under former State Superintendents Patricia Hamamoto and Kathryn Matayoshi, I served as the Department's Military Liaison for 11 years and oversaw the program, which awarded 26 diplomas - one posthumously. I remember a Korean War veteran who was drafted as a teenager. Post-war, he worked in various jobs but found himself needing proof of his education for a new employer. Receiving the diploma meant he qualified for the job. In another case, a World War II veteran confessed to his family that he had never completed high school but always wished he had. The opportunity to receive his honorary diploma brought him and his family a profound sense of joy and closure. In a third case, Sarah Okada Sato, a former [Hawai'i resident](#) who was interred in California's *Tule Lake Relocation Facility* during World War II, received a McKinley High School diploma.

I strongly urge you to support **SB 2614**, which ensures our kupuna continue to be honored for their immense sacrifices. The ***Kūpono Diploma Program*** is not only a testament to their contributions but also acknowledges Hawai'i's historical legacy. Mahalo nui loa for your consideration and support of this important measure.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Cherise Aguada Imai  
February 11, 2026

**SB-2614**

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 6:20:40 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/13/2026 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I SUPPORT SB 2614 which authorizes the Department of Education to award a high school diploma to qualified persons who did not receive a high school diploma as a result of compulsory or voluntary induction into the Armed Services of the United States or whose high school education was interrupted due to wartime practices during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War.

As a person of these generations of persons, many who had compulsory induction into the service of the US, I know that they have had numerous opportunities taken from them, one of them is their high school diploma. This bill takes a step in helping them to rectify this for these folks.

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

**SB-2614**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 1:09:25 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/13/2026 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I KĀKO‘O this bill with no uncertainty. Our veterans deserve this and so much more!

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

**SB-2614**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:21:32 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/13/2026 3:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT

**SB-2614**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:57:51 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/13/2026 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Blazak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chairs Fukunaga and Mercado Kim, Vice Chairs Lee and Kidani, and Members of the Committees,

I support this measure.