



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

SB 3194: Relating to Education

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education and Military Affairs

February 8, 2006

by

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Dean
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Hooser, and Members of the
Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 3194.

There is much in the bill that will help to improve the numbers of competent, caring and qualified teachers in our public schools. We think that it is vitally important to provide compensation and working conditions that will enable us to attract and retain good teachers. To that end, we applaud your efforts to increase teacher compensation and provide other support for them. However, we will reserve our specific comments and recommendations to those items which directly impact teacher preparation and licensing.

Part VI

Thank you for reintroducing the bill on professional development schools (PDS). There is ample research that indicates that teacher candidates who have the opportunity to work in a PDS are more likely to succeed as teachers and to stay longer in the profession than teacher candidates who do not have the benefit of working in a PDS. Part VI of this bill will provide schools the resources they need to get started in creating effective PDSs.

Because this bill passed in 2001 the DOE created the infrastructure and processes to award funds. They were very near awarding grants to schools when the funding was removed. The good news is, that if funding is restored now, the DOE has the infrastructure and process in place to award grants very soon. In fact, there are several schools

that applied for the original funds waiting for the opportunity to apply again.

Part VII

Thank you for introducing legislation to enable the university to award bonuses to teacher educators who obtain national board certification. We are pleased to report that the COE now has a national board certified (NBC) teacher among its faculty. Part VII would make it possible for us to award her and other NBC faculty at the university the same bonuses as teachers in the DOE receive. We do not expect large numbers of university faculty to take advantage of this (surely fewer than ten in the next five years) but these faculty will be particularly important in providing leadership in teacher education as they help to create linkages between the standards and processes of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and our teacher preparation programs.

Part VIII

Thank you for introducing legislation to fund the educator loan program. This program was begun in 2002 but funded for only one year. The university has the infrastructure and processes in place to award funds as early as next fall if this is funded. This program will help the university in its efforts to recruit more teacher candidates in teacher shortage fields.

Other Comments

In Part IV of the bill it is mandated that Hawaii issue teaching licenses to DOD-licensed teachers with at least three years of experience. While we support that idea in theory, we do not believe it is a good idea to put it in statute. The DOD could change their licensing standards at any time and the changes may not be compatible with Hawaii expectations. We support leaving decisions such as this to the state's licensing board which can monitor the DOD and other state licensing standards closely and make more immediate and appropriate changes as needed in Hawaii requirements.

Also in part IV, the department (of education) is added as an entity to license teachers. As currently written it can be taken two ways. One is to require that all licensing standards and procedures be approved by both the board and the DOE. Doing so would negate the purpose of the board

which was to create an entity that would hold the department accountable for hiring qualified teachers. If the intent in this is to make sure that the board and the department work together, current law already does that. The board membership includes the superintendent and one member of the Board of Education.

Another way to interpret the addition of "the department" is to suggest that both the department and the board may license teachers. That too would negate the advantage of having an entity such as the board that holds the DOE (the employer) accountable. All of the professions have licensing boards separate from employers that hold the employers accountable for selecting qualified professionals. The legislature made the right decision in 2001 when it granted full licensing authority to the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board.

In Part IV section 16 C(2) the bill suggests eliminating the testing requirement for teachers. In the 1980s legislatures across the country demanded testing of teachers and it was the education community that was resistant. It is ironic that now legislation is proposed to remove testing for teachers. We are not aware of any hard evidence that the current testing requirements are excluding significant numbers of qualified individuals. In the absence of such data it is prudent to retain the testing or, at the very least, leave this decision to the HTSB.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input into the teacher omnibus bill.

c: SB3195testimony