



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance

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By

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SB 603, SD 2, HD 1 (HSCR 1509): Relating to Education

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports SB 603, SD2, HD1 (HSCR 1509) which clarifies the role of the Board of Education (BOE) in policymaking for charter schools; expands the duties of the Charter School Review Panel; changes the membership of the Panel; authorizes local school boards to enter into long-term lease agreements; clarifies how the executive director of the Charter School Administrative Office (CSAO) is appointed and evaluated; makes the CSAO, rather than BOE, responsible for the staff and resources for the Panel; requires the CSAO to include in its annual budget request a per-pupil amount to start-up charter schools for facilities-related costs; updates the charter school funding mechanism; and appropriates funds to CSAO for its annual budget requests.

The University already has established collaborations with several charter schools. In particular, we are in favor of shifting authority for approving charter school amendments to detailed implementation plans, providing oversight of charter schools, and appointing the Executive Director of the Charter School Administrative Office to the charter school review panel. It also seems prudent to add a few other perspectives to the review panel, specifically, persons with business and real estate expertise. Charter schools are constantly faced with these challenges and it will be helpful to have such expertise on the review panel. Further, including budget amounts specific to facilities support is sorely needed.

The funding formula for charter schools remains controversial, especially the base on which the formula applies. SB 603, SD 2, HD 1 (HSCR 1509) ensures that charter school allocations are based on the most recently approved Department of Education budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.