

SB261

Personal Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education and Housing

February 2, 2009, 1:15 pm, Room 225

by
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SB 261: Relating to the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board

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

The following is personal testimony opposing SB 261 establishing exceptional teacher hires within the Department of Education.

SB261 includes several technical errors. The requirements relating to “highly qualified” teacher are those of the No Child Left Behind legislation rather than HTSB imposed requirements. The credit for past years of teaching related to placing teachers coming from outside Hawaii is a Department of Education policy unrelated to HTSB licensing requirements.

The bill is unnecessary. It implies that the exceptional teacher as described cannot be hired by the Department, when, in fact, they can and are being hired now. Under such conditions a teacher with experience and/or content knowledge, but no current license can be hired to fill high need areas. Teachers hired under such conditions currently have three years to obtain a teaching license, and there are multiple alternative pathways available in the state for such individuals to complete programs meeting HTSB licensing requirements.

Current language in SB261 states that “teacher” means a licensed employee of the department paid under the unit 5 collective bargaining agreement. This implies that anyone who is teaching in classrooms, but does not hold a current license, is not a teacher, which is not correct.

Hiring exceptional teachers can be done now under existing policies. There is no need for this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB261.