



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Please don't furlough

1 message

Tovah Stafford <piscesmermaid808@yahoo.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 2:59 PM

I'm barely surviving right now and if I have a furlough there's no way I can continue to do my job and live in Hawaii.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

J A <janearakaki@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 3:40 PM

Aloha BOE,

I know I am a few hours late, but I hope this testimony will still be accepted.

I find it very unfair that teachers are asked to furlough just because the State did not do a good job at budgeting. Education is the first to sacrifice when things are bad, but are last (or most times, do not even have the chance) to reap the benefits when times are good.

Test scores from Hawaii children are low compared to other states; this was the case before COVID. If teachers are forced to furlough, our children will suffer greatly.

There has to be another way for the State to cover their losses. Freeze hiring, ask Governor Ige and other higher ranking government officials to take a bigger pay cut. Greater sacrifices must be made from top officials.

Teachers greatly helped the economy of other lines of business throughout the pandemic; we must now fight and help our teachers!

Please rethink furlough for our teachers. They are what will shape our children to be our future.

Mahalo,
Jane Arakaki



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Rachel Reyes <rachel.reyes@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 3:42 PM

Rachel Reyes
First Grade Teacher at Kihei Elementary

Aloha,

For the last 13 years, I have been a kindergarten and first grade teacher at Kihei Elementary. I started as a young single woman and am now a wife and mother of two boys who also attend Kihei Elementary.

My family has lived paycheck to paycheck over the last 13 years because of high rent and low pay. Beginning this school year with a raise was a blessing and I thought, "maybe I'll actually be able to start saving for my kids to go to college". News of this furlough is such a blow to my family that for the first time in 13 years I am having to make the decision of staying in Maui, my home that I love, or leaving.

I love my students here in Kihei and put my all into teaching them. They love me too! Kids in my class feel welcome and loved every day. I don't want to leave, but have to choose a future for my own children. That future is looking impossible here if the furloughs happen.

Mahalo for listening,
Rachel Reyes

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony Teacher Furlough

1 message

raynettek@yahoo.com <raynettek@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 3:47 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a DOE first grade teacher and I am writing in regards to Governor Ige's announcement of teacher furloughs.

If you are reading this, I am hoping that you understand that teachers in Hawaii are struggling with the cost of living and our sad paycheck. Most of our paycheck goes back into the classroom because we CARE about our students. Most of us put our STUDENTS before our OWN children and family. To furlough teachers is insulting and unrealistic and will be a hardship on all teachers. How do you expect us to live? Most of us, including myself, are living paycheck to paycheck. But yet, we give so much to our students, to the DOE and to the State of Hawaii. To furlough us, is a slap in the face.

This school has been very rough on myself and many more teachers in the DOE. We are BURNT OUT , we are TIRED and EXHUSTED! We are doing the BEST we can to serve our community and students with what we got. Many of my teacher friends and coworkers want to call it quits!!! I'm sure if you allow Governor Ige to furlough us NOW, you are going to see many teachers quit in a heartbeat. What will you do when there's a mass of QUALIFIED teachers leaving this profession? What type of quality education will students get then? We are already stretched thin, and we are asking for your help!!!

If you believe that our keiki are the future, help protect the profession that is teaching the future! If you want quality citizens for the future, help teachers NOW!!!

Thank you,
A concerned DOE Teacher

December 16, 2020

To: State of Hawaii
Board of Education

From: James Logue, M.P.A.
Honolulu, HI

Re: State of Hawaii, Board of Education Furlough Announcement.

Aloha,

This letter comes to you in **STRONG OPPOSITION** to the Board of Education's announcement to implement furloughs. As a current employee of the State of Hawaii I am one of the thousands of public servants who will be negatively impacted by the Governor's decision that the furloughs are a necessary step at this time despite opposing research presented to his administration by experts.

The Board of Education's decision to furlough our dedicated public servants conveys the impression that our state leaders have little to no regard for our keiki's education and future opportunities. Such a decision would not only be taking money away from many families who are already struggling but would dramatically decrease the quality and efficiency of educational programs that thousands of students rely upon across the state.

The State of Hawaii has been trying to come up with solutions to what has been deemed a "*Teacher Shortage Crisis*" as our highly qualified college graduates leave the islands, their families, and their friends, to pursue careers in education on the mainland. Deciding at this critical time to furlough workers would accelerate the rate at which our underpaid teachers and staff flee the state in pursuit of better opportunities. This will cause a further decline in the quality of education of our students as well as a decline in the moral of our hardworking teachers and education staff.

We need money in the hands of our people to spend in our local economy. We need people spending money at our businesses so that other industries can thrive and continue providing jobs to other residents. We need our public servants to be paid their due wages as agreed upon in their Collective Bargaining Agreements.

We don't need more people struggling to pay rent, falling further behind on bills, accruing more debt, and not having disposable income to support our local economy.

I urge the Board of Education to think about the disastrous long-term impacts of such a decision and to please reconsider their proposed furloughs.

Mahalo for your time.

James Logue, M.P.A.
Honolulu, Hawaii



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Impact on Furloughs Testimony

1 message

Natalia Steinhorst-Soler <kumunatalia@kawaikini.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 4:42 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha e BOE,

I am a special education teacher at a Hawaiian Immersion Charter on Kaua'i.

I have been in public education since 2002. I am certified in special education, math, general education, and bilingual education. I have a Master's in Special Education and I am currently completing a second Master's in Educational Leadership and Administration.

I recall being worried as a college student watching teacher pay being affected by Governor Cayetano when there was a teacher strike. That scared me about coming into the profession. Then with Governor Lingle with the failing furlough Fridays where I made more money cleaning oceanfront vacation rentals in one day than in a whole week of teaching as a beginning teacher. Then with Governor Abercrombie who had a background in education and we all thought would be an ally, but he cut our pay with the DLWOP days, losing pay and taking away important time that teachers need to prepare and perform their many duties. Now here we are again with Governor Ige and unforeseen circumstances due to a pandemic.

The question I ask at this point is, what are our values and priorities as a state? What do we hold sacred? Because in my career I can say that education is not a value or a priority, it is the first and most frequently cut item in any legislator's budget.

In March my husband lost his full-time job and has not been able to regain employment, my tenants have not been able to maintain their income, so I felt blessed that thanks to my income I would be able to hold down the fort until other areas of the economy recover. To my surprise, this year I have been asked to do more work and hold more IEPs than any other year. I was denied my ability to reclassify by DOE through my Chamide University Master's in Educational Leadership & Administration because I am employed at a charter school and now I am looking at a reduction in pay due to unilateral furloughs.

Enough is enough. We can't say we value education and keiki, that we wish to reduce homelessness, crime, drug abuse, and wonder why there is a teacher shortage when time after time the very systems meant to support education, keiki, and educators are the same systems that sabotage, cut, and defund us.

Please be coherent with your vision and mission. Be respectful of us as professionals, be fair to our contract and the bargaining process.

We have gone above and beyond during this pandemic to be disregarded and neglected by our own leaders.

Sincerely,

Natalia Steinhorst-Soler

--

A hui hou,

Kumu Natalia
Kumu Ko'o
Kawaikini NCPCS
808 632 2032

"O ka 'olu'olu e hau'oli ia." 'Ōlelo no'eau

"Kindness is loaning someone your strength instead of reminding them of their weakness" Andy Stanley



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough Testimony

1 message

Sina P. Pili <pili.sina.p@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 5:03 PM

Dear DOE,

I work hard fulfilling my job responsibilities and taking a cut for all my hardwork degrades my value I give to the DOE for our students. In addition, the cost of living in Hawaii is already high. The pay we receive is already not enough to sustain living in this costly state. Cutting our pay will only put my family into a more financial struggle. In addition, my husband is a state worker and we are looking at about not being able to pay for our 2 car payments a month with furloughs, or my daughters daycare costs and we both are essential workers, or all of our utility bills. The furloughs will put our family in a financial crisis and we are considering of relocating.

Please don't furlough.

Sina P. Pili



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Impact of Furloughs

1 message

carol thomley <thomleyteacher808@yahoo.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 5:27 PM

I will retire!
Shame, Hawaii's BOE needs to cut the fat off the top.

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs for Teachers

1 message

Shaunna Au <shaunna72@aol.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 5:47 PM

Hi!

My name is Shaunna Au. My son is 5 years old. He's autistic and is now attending school every day because he needs the face to face interaction. He is currently still transitioning into the regular kindergarten class from the SPED preschool class. He does have a one on one. Since he only has his kindergarten class on Wednesdays and Thursdays, he is still going to his SPED preschool class on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday just to keep on going. He was doing distanced learning for a few weeks in the beginning but that did not work. It threw everything off for him. He really needs structure and routine. If that doesn't happen he will go off track and then it starts all over from square one. His SPED teachers are key for him and so is attending class. It is already hard just trying to get special services for him. The waiting lists are a year or two because of the pandemic and the staffing at multiple places. I have called all over. That's why his teachers are really important. I ask to please highly reconsider furloughing our teachers. Especially for my son they play a big role in his life. The less he attends class, the harder it is of him to keep on track. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,
Shaunna Au
Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

Cathy Cummings <ccummings021415@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:17 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I bring home 66.95 a day as a elementary school clerk, now the 66.95 is before they take more money out for furloughs. But it is so interesting that earlier this year I was deemed essential but now you want to furlough me but not other workers and exempt them from furloughs, that is so wrong, we were important when you needed schools opened so we were essential but now let's take almost 10% of our paycheck. I see why so many people get depressed. We are at a place where we don't make enough to survive but we don't qualify for food stamps or help. But the unemployed got an extra 600.00 they ended up making more staying home. How about helping us out instead of taking more away from us, this is the 2nd time we are losing days from our paycheck. We went through this years ago. And lge is thinking maybe 4 yrs of furloughs, I don't care he's taking a pay cut he makes a lot more also.

Sent from my iPad



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Carmen Kinny <carmenkinny@yahoo.com>
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:30 PM

Testimony

I'm a special education teacher at a public elementary school in Hawai'i. I'm writing testimony regarding furloughs. I was born and raised here, and received my teaching credentials (paid for by the DOE) from UH Manoa. I have nowhere else to call home, but am now considering moving to the mainland to try teaching there.

What is being done to special education in public schools here is unacceptable. The amount of time special education teachers are allowed to give during the school day to their special needs students keeps diminishing with each incorrect and unintelligent state-wide decision made.

The push to put as many students as possible in inclusion, regardless of their suitable class placement based on their needs or academic level, cut their on-level learning time in half. Then, decisions to cut the special ed budget by ten percent were announced, which might leave all public schools with so few special education teachers that they will be forced to be full-time IEP writers, leaving students with special needs to be babysat more than taught in general ed rooms. Now, furloughs are announced, which will definitely cut the learning time of students again.

With all of these cuts to special ed instructional time, the children who need the most academic learning are getting the least. I am someone working in the thick of it, and I am very concerned that a much larger percentage of students with special needs will end up illiterate for life because of the unintelligent and greedy decisions being made now. Illiteracy will exclude these children from life, not include them in it. Studies have shown that a high number of prison inmates are illiterate. The choices we make for these children now can have devastating consequences for them for life. And, they will be living right beside all of us. The choices we make for them affect humanity, and can have devastating consequences for our society as well.

Please consider your choices. Thank you.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Pending Furloughs

1 message

dupontohana@hawaiiantel.net <dupontohana@hawaiiantel.net>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:36 PM

Aloha,

As an Educational Assistant in the DOE, and a member of the HGEA, I would like to add my testimony to others, who will be negatively impacted by the Governor's plan to furlough state workers, beginning in January of 2021.

How will these furloughs affect my family? Well, my husband and I are already struggling with the high cost of living. The State's mismanagement of the monies that we have paid with our hard-earned taxes, are now, once again, being placed on the backs of the people. One suggestion, which we apply to our own family budget, is to learn to live within your means, and trim the fat. Governor Ige, and all those in charge, can start with their own paychecks. It is sad, that the very people who work to keep the community safe, educated, healthy, and running, are considered the fat that needs to be trimmed. Hewa loa.

Our school is already struggling to keep our students educated and safe, and now, we are being asked to sacrifice more. Many of our older, more experienced teachers are leaving in droves. They see how difficult it will be, to run their classrooms without the support of EAs and PPTs. I would love to see the Governor, his staff, and members of the legislature, come visit, and teach a class of Special Needs students without support. They wouldn't be able to last a day; there would be more lawsuits, and we'd be in an even deeper hole.

If I had enough savings, I would love to retire, but I'd have to move away from the lands of my ancestors. There is no way that I could survive here, where you cater to visitors, and forget about the people you represent. Sadly, like my children who left the islands over a decade ago, I, too, may have to pack up and leave.

Please, reconsider these furloughs, and how it will affect your state workers. If you have no other options, then at least do things the right way. Make things pono. Encourage Superintendent Christina Kishimoto to be transparent and honest with us. When her contract is up, send her packing, as she has done nothing for those who labor in education. Use the correct process of collective bargaining regarding these furloughs, as it is the constitutional right of public employees. Sit down and talk to those who represent us, and see the value in all the little "cogs" that make up the community you were chosen to represent.

U'ilani DuPont



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Beth Ann Kauwe <bethkauwe@icloud.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:04 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item VB Presentation on questions regarding Dept of Education furloughs.

I am writing to urge you to reject the proposed furloughs for teachers. At a time when we cannot retain teachers, when we are asked to do more and reinvent our teaching, thoughts of docking our pay are on the table ? This is incredibly insulting and disheartening. How can there not be more creative ways to balance the budget?

I personally am struggling with paying the mortgage and bills with my husband having lost his job last spring. Due to this loss, I took on extra course work to move over on the salary guide only to learn it won't help if furloughs are instituted. Aside from harming my financial situation and my spirit (as we were once deemed ESSENTIAL workers), this will hurt our Keiki. How can we think of taking more days away from their education? They deserve MORE time in school, more continuity of learning, and more stability.

I lived through the 2010 furloughs and never regained my step on the guide. This blatant disrespect makes me want to retire early! Why is education always the first to be cut?

Say no to furloughs if you care about the future for all of us!

Sincerely,

Beth Kauwe

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Roberts, Moyrah <moyrah.roberts@kalakauamiddle.org>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:26 PM

This school year has already been one of the toughest with the changes due to COVID-19--then this. What next? Furloughs are just "the straw that may break the camel's back". I mean, how much more stress and frustration are teachers to endure without completely breaking? I'm trying my best to "hang in there", but what is the incentive? I like teaching, and I like helping students learn, but I have to live also.

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Too soon

1 message

Deanna Kackley <dkackley@hawaii.edu>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:20 PM

Make a determination of the US congress Bipartisan support for schools before you decide anything...furloughs, really?



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony member for 10years

1 message

Cheryl Mckee <cherylmckee2014@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:26 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I have been a member for 10 years now. I am struggling to pay my bills , mortgage, car payments medical bills. My husband just got out of the hospital and got meds that he takes. 1 of his mb edicine cost 1000 per dose another one cost 500 per prescription that is a lot of money. I just took a 12 month BT position and i will get furlough 10 times instead of 6. I got a child in college which i Pay out of pocket another one that going to graduate this school year and a 4th grader. My college chold helps my fourth grade with onlihe studies and ends up stayinh up all night doing her homevwork
I am struggling from the furloughs that was implement by linda lingle.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

(no subject)

1 message

Cupid Shinyama <shinyama@hotmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:28 PM

To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

How are WE SUPPOSED to live on imposed furlough days that will cut our pay almost 10% ???..Ige makes more than any of us EAs and teachers and he and his cabinet members are gonna take the same amount of about 10% their salary??? I struggle to pay my rent...car payment...GROCERIES...disabled parent care???

Sent from [Outlook](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Re: Furlough Testimony Copied into Email

1 message

Elizabeth Baclayon <sedgekitty1608@gmail.com>
To: Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:44 PM

Testimony

With respect to the BOE,

I am an immunocompromised, cancer surviving teacher with 28 years experience in the middle school classroom. I testify that the impending furloughs will destroy my family financially while the risk of contracting Covid 19 from face to face teaching will quite possibly destroy my life. This double whammy will force me to leave my beloved profession unless the furloughs are stopped. PPE cannot protect my bank account, children's needs, home, car, etc. from devastating loss of pay.

As if teaching during a deadly pandemic weren't horrible enough, and with all students returning for face to face blended instruction after winter break, now I am expected to not only die while carrying out my job, but to do so for significantly less pay. This heinous situation will be the final straw in my decision to retire early. I cannot afford to do this, but I also cannot afford to die and leave my family without a main source of financial support and my loved ones without their Mother, wife, and sister.

In the 28 years I've dedicated to the DOE and my beloved students, while teaching full time and raising a family I earned my Masters Degree in US History, won a national fellowship from the James Madison Memorial Foundation and completed all rigorous academic and professional requirements to earn the esteemed title of national "Teacher- Scholar of the U.S. Constitution." I received letters of commendation for excellence in teaching from Congresswoman Mazie Hirono, the late Senator Daniel K. Inouye, and former U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. I was nominated for Teacher of the Year twice. Of my own initiative, I created and teach a Holocaust Studies class to address bullying and racism at my middle school campus.

I have taught with passion and loyalty and planned to teach joyfully in the classroom well beyond my 30 years. Furloughs will destroy this plan and deprive students of a highly qualified, experienced teacher. Even before the pandemic Hawaii had a chronic teacher shortage precisely because of decades of furloughs, pay cuts, and step freezes. Who will replace me, an 18 year old with only a high school diploma or GED and no professional educational training or experience? How will that benefit Hawaii's keiki?

The financial devastation wreaked by these new furloughs on top of risking my immunocompromised health teaching face to face after being denied telework (despite my Pulmonologist advocating for telework to keep me from Covid related death) will be the death knoll in my teaching career, at least in Hawaii. I do not exaggerate. Like thousands of other teachers I have been through the educators' financial armageddon that this State has thrown us into many times before in my nearly 3 decades of teaching here. Payroll lags, Furlough Fridays, pay cuts, reclassification freezes, pay freezes, step increase freezes. I am still recovering financially from those, on top of which I am still paying off cancer related medical debt from ever increasing health insurance premiums. Now, I'm expected to lose a minimum of 6 full days of pay? With no proportional decrease in workload, in fact the workload will be worsened because the furloughs take away crucial planning time. In fact, our first furlough day will eradicate our teacher work day of January 4, which

we desperately need to safely prepare our classrooms for the significant transition from distance learning to blended face to face instruction.

As if the nonchalance of the DOE and Governor in their tacit acceptance of teachers' lives as expendable and collateral damage weren't vile enough, now we must risk our lives for less pay. Who will suffer? Our families, our children, our students, and our local economy. Furloughs are premature when our State legislature has authorized the State to borrow money, and Congress is working on a stimulus bill. Here is an example of the financial fall out affecting keiki:

As I tried in vain to rearrange furniture to accommodate 6 feet social distancing (knowing a recent scientific study from Korea demonstrated Covid infections at 21 feet and farther), I placed a small bottle of hand sanitizer, a container of sanitizing wipes, and a box of kleenex on each desk. That is all that I have. These will run out in two weeks or less of students' return to school January 5. With the furloughs I CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO BUY THESE SAFETY SUPPLIES OUT OF MY OWN POCKET AND THERE IS NO MONEY IN OUR SCHOOL BUDGET FOR CONTINUOUS REPLACEMENT! LIVES WILL BE IMPERILED!

This is just one example of how the furloughs will affect students. Teachers will no longer be able to make up the shortfalls in resources and supplies with their own money!

Teachers will quit. Veteran teachers like myself, who are highly qualified and proven to be highly effective in the classroom, will retire early.

Teachers, like myself, will lose their cars, their homes, and our children will have to leave college because their parents can no longer help cover the cost.

The irony is this: furloughed teachers have NO money to shop in our own local economy yet we are one of the primary reasons the economy is able to reopen because the State is sacrificing our health so that children can return to school in order that their parents can return to work.

First our physical lives are imperiled by the State so that teachers can serve as babysitters for reopening the economy, and now our financial lives are sacrificed as well, and both are done quite callously as demonstrated by taking away a crucial day of planning to prepare our classrooms safely for the return of students.

With furloughs, God forbid we die from Covid while teaching face to face in our classroom because now our families won't even be able to afford to bury us properly.

I implore you to stop these shortsighted furloughs and beseech the Governor and the DOE to use State surplus and await Federal stimulus monies to cover the shortfalls.

Thank you for your time,

Elizabeth Baclayon

Grade 8 US History and Grades 7 & 8 Holocaust Studies Teacher

CKMS, Kaua'i

On Wed, Dec 16, 2020, 3:53 PM Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov> wrote:

We are unable to open and save your testimony. Please either copy it into your email or submit it as a pdf. not a word doc.

Thank you,
Board Office

On Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 3:44 PM Elizabeth Baclayon (via Google Docs) <sedgekitty1608@gmail.com> wrote:

sedgekitty1608@gmail.com has invited you to **edit** the following document:

 [Furlough Testimony](#)

[Open in Docs](#)

sedgekitty1608@gmail.com is outside your organization.

Google Docs: Create and edit documents online.

Google LLC, [1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA](#)

You have received this email because sedgekitty1608@gmail.com shared a document with you from Google Docs.





Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Cameron Inouye-Ng <cameroninouyeng@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:42 PM

To whom this may concern,

Growing up here in Hawaii, I was in high school during the time of "Furlough Friday's" and I thought it was great as a student. But now, as a third year teacher, I am afraid for these days. These furlough days are not only going to affect me, they are going to significantly impact my students. My students are losing out on instructional time as is. They are coming to school face-to-face twice a week and have virtual learning the other three days. When these furloughs are put into place, they will be losing out on more time to interact with me, their teacher. During this time of distance teaching, I have noticed that some of my shy students felt more comfortable asking questions through WebEx rather than in person. And by taking away these learning times, my students are losing out on an opportunity to ask for help.

If we are expected to take standardized tests this year, my students will not be ready. Right now they are getting half of the curriculum since we are in the blended learning model. And now you want us to teach them everything before standardized testing this spring?! I do not understand how you expect us to cram everything in this shortened school year for standardized testing.

These furloughs would affect me personally too. I am still paying for my car loan, student loans, and I am trying to tie up loose ends with my late mom's unexpected financial issues. These furlough days are not just days off, these are days where I cannot work to save for my future. I have plans of buying a house here and with this situation, my dreams are being put on hold again.

Please reconsider the furloughs, not just for us teachers, but for our students who will one day be the leaders.

Best,

Cameron Inouye-Ng



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

A concerned parent

1 message

Morningstar Peake <morningstaronmaui@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:31 PM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear Governor, it concerns me deeply to hear that there is consideration to cut our teachers pay starting January 2021. I feel that this is the wrong sector to give a pay cut if a pay cut is indeed necessary. Please do not put more stress on our teachers. My daughters are in 5th and 8th grade and I have witnessed how creative and flexible their teachers have been through this pandemic and things have not been easy beginning with the expectation to start face to face learning in August then a complete 180 degree change of plans to virtual learning with very little time to prepare and now getting the kids back into the classrooms and figure out how to do blended teaching, it's been so much on our teachers. They do not deserve a pay cut, they deserve a raise! I I Understand a raise is not an option but please do not cut their salary. Our teachers deserve better so that they can teach and lead our children, our future.

Sincerely, please reconsider.

Morningstar Mills Peake
808.250.7844



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Education Furloughs

1 message

Thomasina Simmons <thomasinasimmons@rocketmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:48 PM

It is unnecessary to have teachers to take furlough days. Teacher always take the hit when it comes to these kinds of cuts.

It's time for others to step up their game. We have too many workers who DONT WORK. They don't hustle. It takes 4 guys to watch one guy fill a pothole. Seriously! I've seen this a number of times.

This state needs an overhaul. Too many people getting paid to do minimal work...and they get paid well! Waste! We are not being fiscally responsible and changing with the times.

We saw that 2020 allowed some state offices to work virtually and for things to get processed online. No need for all the extra building costs, parking/traffic problems, standing in lines. Time to move in the 21st Century and be more efficient.

Education... that has to change, too... but kids need to be in school. This is NOT GOOD for kids. They need good teachers. They need to enjoy learning. Some need to get away from their abusive homes.

Don't take from education.

Sent from my iPhone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

We can't afford furloughs

1 message

Ms Jazz M <msjasminemathew@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov
Cc: Jasmine Mathew <Jasmine.Mathew@k12.hi.us>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 3:05 AM

My Dear Respective Board of Education,

Please find another way to fund state budget deficits.

I do not make enough money to survive here as the sole bread winner of my family of two.

This past year I've had to have a lumpectomy, radiation & hormone therapy. This is my ninth year with the Hawaii DOE. One year at Kihei charter school and eight years at kaiser High school.

I've dedicated my life to my work with my students and literally work around the clock to meet the needs of my students and their parents as a Science teacher (Biology and Chemistry), Class of 2017 & Class of 2022 Advisor, Medical club, PAAC, Film club and Science bowl advisor.

Our students' education has been sacrificed already with covid 19 and we need to continue to keep up the momentum, time and support needed for our students to be competitive in the real world.

We have been approved for housing rental assistance and I've applied for help with our electric and medical bills.

Please try your best to not sacrifice the well being of myself and other hard working dedicated teachers in our kingdom. Please protect us. I cannot survive a pay cut in 2021.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Jasmine Mathew
808-321-9914



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Betty <bettyluvstrivia@yahoo.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 5:37 AM

Reply-To: Betty <bettyluvstrivia@yahoo.com>

To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Dear BOE,

My understanding is the Governor wants to use furlough days instead of a reduction in force. (I also understand he may also feel the budgetary need to hand out layoffs)

I am grateful to have a job even if I'm getting paid 9% to 10% less!

I'm grateful the schools will be closed on our furlough days because it is better than having to work every day AND getting paid less for it.

The alternatives to furlough days is not attractive.

I want to keep my job.

And I'd rather have the day off with the lower pay.

If the unions give the Governor a hard time he may reduce our pay AND make us work.

If the unions keep giving the Governor a hard time he may move straight to a reduction in force.

I hope the unions accept the furloughs and remind the grumblers they should be grateful they still have a job.

Mahalo for everything else you do for us.

Betty

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Perry Buchalter <psbuchalter@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 6:01 AM

To whom this may concern,

During this pandemic, I should not have to tell you that one of the many shining lights, aside from the medical profession and first responders, has been teachers and the lengths we went to to make sure our students maintained the education they deserved.

Every parent all of a sudden recognizes teaching is no easy task as they have had to take on part of this role for their child to some degree, and have been singing their praises for what we do in our profession.

In these dire times, we are blessed to have our jobs and have taken on many new tasks including putting our lives on the line as students return to school and yet we are under attack once again as our Governor has targeted education for extreme budget cuts. The State of Hawaii is proposing cuts that would cut positions, electives, and enlarge class sizes at a time when we should be increasing opportunities for our students.

Those of us teachers in the State of Hawaii who had our step movements frozen after the market crash in 2008 were finally recognized as the "Compression Track" and a pay raise that would properly reflect our years in service was finally approved and was set to kick in just before the Pandemic hit. We no sooner got the well-deserved news when the raise in pay was immediately taken back, this was a huge pay-cut for us. Despite this tremendous set-back we continued to do our jobs, working more than ever to learn new strategies for distance learning and revamping graduation ceremonies last year to assure our students were recognized for their accomplishments.

Our politicians always speak on the importance of education during campaign speeches, but once in office immediately seem to forget this as we fight for a living wage. To this day, Teacher's salaries keep us in either the poverty or low-income levels for Hawaii's cost of living projections. This is a heartfelt plea from teachers who give heart and soul to our students who once again feel the dedication we give to our profession means very little to those in politics, who will always tout education in their campaign platforms then immediately turn their backs on us once in office.

--

Perry S. Buchalter, NBCT
BA, Fine Arts/CTE Department
Molokai High School



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furlough and layoffs

1 message

ny_costa24@yahoo.com <ny_costa24@yahoo.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 6:22 AM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Nyree Costa, Im A Educational Assistant at Keonepoko Elementary School, I had been at Keonepoko on the Big Island for 15 + years. I was informed 12/16/2020 that my Position has been cut for the 2021/2022 school year. I am a single person loving my job and this has come to me like a brick wall. This will impact my life financially. All these budget cuts and furloughs is not going to make things better for anyone. Our state students are already struggling, we have a high number of Sped. Students and you want to take more staff and days away from them is very upsetting and bothering and know as a poor Educational system! Please find a way to better this situation. Myself and many others are affected and hope for a better outcome. Our Economy will have a major affect from this. Myself and others are considering of moving states looking for employment if this happens and we don't have our positions next school year.

Thank you,
Nyree Costa

Ny



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

(no subject)

1 message

Cosme Amulacion <cosme101@gmail.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 7:20 AM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This furlough will affect our family come January 2021 both financially and mentally challenging,. we are a family of 3, surviving whatever income I bring home, to make matters worse, we're getting ready to move into our new home sometime mid January. Our monthly bills were calculated on a basis of what I bring home now, with the furlough and pay cut on it's way, I really need to think and pray on how to get by every month. I've been working from the beginning of this pandemic to feed our students.....this message is for the Governor, dear Governor, you really can't find another solution to balance the state's budget other than to put your state workers on furlough, make then take pay cuts for 4 years??? The last I check, your plan only penalize state workers, I suggest you should penalize everyone who lives in Hawaii, by raising the general excise tax, or legalize gambling so our residents don't have to go to Vegas, maybe even legalize medicinal marijuana, we got tons of Ag land available, or even legalize lottery here, I think that would pull the state out of this financial crisis, and that's all I have to say.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Furloughs

1 message

Karol Wack <alohilani39@aol.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 7:46 AM

Dear Distinguished Members of the BOE,

It is the end of the first semester and I was happy to receive my effective rating for EES, then the Governor announced the furloughs. I felt the opposite of appreciated, my rating was meaningless and a pit of anxiety formed in my stomach at the thought of how this cut will devastate so many, myself included.

We already have 1,000 vacant positions. Do the powers that be know the damage this cut will cause?! Teachers anywhere near retirement will leave, mainland teachers that came here to teach will leave because they will no longer be able to afford to stay and many others will leave as well to seek employment that will put food on their table and keep a roof over their head.

With this cut, I would make less than I was substitute teaching. I couldn't afford to support myself substituting, so I took a full time position last year. Don't get me wrong, I don't do it for the pay, none of us do. The long hours, the weekends. I love my students, I love my school. Everything I do, I do for my students. I give so much for them because that is what teachers do. But if we get these furloughs, I will have to leave the profession. I am single and support myself on a beginning teaching salary. The differentials that we began receiving in January made a huge positive difference in my life. I understand those may have to be taken away, but to cut a \$49k a year salary (before taxes) is saying that I mean nothing and that my students mean nothing.

Please stand with teachers, our keiki deserve better. There must be another solution. Please, I don't want to leave my students and see our education system devastated by a mass exodus of teachers. It will harm our students and further cripple the economy. Mahalo for the opportunity to share my thoughts and feelings.

Sincerely,

Karol Wack
Special Education Teacher
FSC/Resource K-2
Honoka'a Elementary School
Hawaii Island

Dear Board of Directors,

I usually don't send these kinds of testimony in for fear of retaliation by people who are above in the totem pole that is the DOE, nor have I ever felt my voice would ever be heard in recent events. One could say that I've been "beaten into complacency" by all the recent news, changes, and events that are out of my control during these trying times.

I still feel that my voice is meaningless to the higher ups in the BOE/DOE, but nevertheless, I am writing this to you. For what it's worth, I've been supportive of the governor for most of his term in office. I've trusted the Superintendent up until this past year. I've said time and time again, I don't want to be in any of your positions during this time of COVID. But, I've expected much more support from those who have been given the responsibility of representing us teachers at the highest levels of our state's government.

I am a citizen of Hawai'i. Struggling to make ends meet like many in my position. I am a bowling coach. I am a club advisor. I help out in the eSports community in Hawai'i. I am fortunate enough to have been able to afford a home of my own with my fiancé and her mother. Both of whom suffer from visible, physical disabilities, and invisible, mental disabilities.

But I am also a teacher. I instruct students who come from all sorts of backgrounds. I teach at a Title I school. I will assume you all know what that means. Everyday is a new experience with the students and faculty even before COVID-19 reared its ugly head.

Last year I was asked to give no work in Q4 and just "sustain learning." I did. Then, after a summer of silence, I was asked to do the impossible: go full virtual in less than two weeks. But I did. Then I was asked to navigate students through an impossible full distance learning environment, keep the rigor the same, while I learn on the fly how to do it all. But I feel like I did. I also made a ton of tutorials to help my fellow educators who were struggling with this impossible task thrown on our plates while I myself figured it all out.

Now we teachers are told that we're being furloughed and our pay reduced. It's already a struggle getting students to understand content and keep myself motivated to instruct them with the minimal "training" I received from the DOE in this time of COVID. It's already a struggle to continually think of new ways to motivate students in a 100% online environment. It's already a struggle not knowing what's going to happen in the future with the DOE/BOE seemingly not in support of us teachers.

Now you're asking me to do all of this with less pay and less time to prepare. No. Don't do this to us. You don't have to. HSTA President Corey Rosenlee outlines that there are many ways to not furlough us. I don't want to think about making a mortgage payment or feeding my family. I don't want to have to pick up another job. Teaching is already 24/7, 365. Yet we aren't paid nearly what I think the job demands of us. And now we're threatened with less.

I don't want to hear that I don't care for the kids. I do! They are the reason I took the profession! It's a cheap blow to every teacher to say we don't care about the kids. But if I can't care for myself first, HOW CAN I CARE FOR THE KIDS?! I have overcome impossible challenges this year that keep continuing to build atop one another.

I'm tired. We're all tired. If these furloughs and days cuts go through, we're going to be more tired. Our teacher force is already short. It's going to get shorter. "Someone will take up the burden" right? Statistics say, less and less likely. I will listen to the word of the law if they do go through. Directed leave means to me, no work. So I won't. And who will suffer? The kids. And then maybe...you'll blame me? I hope you can look in the mirror and see the impossibilities you've already put teachers through.

Like I said before, I don't feel my voice is heard. I doubt it will. That's how far my confidence has fallen for the BOE, DOE, and the State to fight for education. I want to believe in our government. I want to trust that the people who are paid to make huge decisions for education are making ones that support it, not make it worse. But...I doubt. And will continue to doubt until something happens otherwise.

Thank you for your time,

Kellen Inafuku
Teacher
Waipahu High
808-227-4779



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Andrew Henderson <andrew.henderson@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 8:01 AM

My wife and I are both teachers on the Big Island and have 7-year-old twin boys who aren't in school. The burden of worrying about child care is already great without factoring in pay cuts. The combined impact of these furlough days will be around \$1,000/month less income in our household not including child care expenses for 2 children! We already run a successful business on the side to make ends meet so I have no idea how single-income teachers will stay financially secure.

Another issue is that the governor obviously assumes that we will complete the work we should be doing on our planning and finishing days. It will just happen on our own time. Our good nature is being exploited.

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY

1 message

Melissa Hilson <melissa.hilson@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 8:12 AM

~~~TESTIMONY~~~

Good morning Board of Education. How are you doing? Well, we teachers are NOT doing well! We are overworked and underpaid!!! YOU have the power to protect public education funding and support our fight against lge's furlough nonsense. Personally, cutting my salary would force me to get a second job or potentially return to the mainland as a teacher and earn a higher salary. Seven teachers have already left their teaching positions this first semester at the high school I am employed. EVERY single year (and I am a veteran teacher of 15 years here on Kauai) we lose teachers because of financial struggles.

When are you going to vote to pay us a livable wage? Teachers have worked twice as hard this past year and now we get a slap in the face pay cut?! What?! Meanwhile, my friends are enjoying luxurious lifestyles while on the beach collecting unemployment and stimulus checks. This makes NO sense! Why hurt those who are slaving away to produce productive members of society?

Please, I beg you to reconsider this decision to furlough us. I have so much more to say, but hey, I must get back to my JOB!

Mahalo.

Sincerely saddened 🙄 public school teacher,  
Melissa Hilson

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Boreas v** <boreasv@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 8:25 AM

Testimony

Teachers are already leaving. I am a teacher at Kauai High School and I urge you to avoid furloughs and pay cuts for teachers. At my school teachers have already left to take jobs in other states in anticipation of coming cuts.

It is impossible to attract and retain good teachers if they are not paid enough. Without enough good teachers, all efforts to improve public education in Hawaii are doomed. Teacher salaries were already too low before the current budget crisis. The proposed furloughs will have a long term effect on the quality of public education in Hawaii.





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## How will furloughs effect me?

1 message

**Desiree Soto** <desireevsoto@yahoo.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 8:35 AM

Reply-To: Desiree Soto &lt;desireevsoto@yahoo.com&gt;

To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Aloha,

My name is Desiree Soto. I have been an educational assistant since 2002, permanent in 2006. I have been through the first round of furloughs that were put in place a few years back. It wasn't easy then, and It will be worse now.

Now, I am a mother of a special needs child who has just begun preschool. I have elderly parents at home who are slowly showing signs of slowing down physically. I have more at stake. More to worry about. More to lose. Every paycheck is counted down to the penny. I have always loved my job, but it is a struggle to get by just working the one job. So, I had to take on a second job. Now, with another round of furloughs...I may need a third job to make it, or may need to take on more and later hours at my second job. This means more time taken from my child, my first and only child, and less help for my parents in the home.

I work hard. I love what I do. I go above and beyond for my students and teachers... But it is things like this that make me question how much we are appreciated. Will I leave? After this, for the first time ever...im considering it.

Thank for your time,  
Desiree Soto

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**BOE Furlough Testimony**1 message

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**Karen Kama** <dakamas@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 8:37 AM

Dear Board Members,

I'm here as a member of the Related Services team. We SLPs, OTs and PTs provide much needed and often requested therapy for special education children, but we have never been "essential." We've requested increases in salary or reimbursement of certification fees to match our mainland counterparts, but the DOE declined. There has been such a severe shortage of providers that we often cover multiple schools providing not just therapy, but evaluations, consultations, all while doing our best to connect with students, families and team members, but we've never been "essential." In fact even though our staffing shortage has been more dismal than our special education teacher counterparts, the DOE said they weren't interested in offering the same incentives for retaining and recruiting Related Service Providers. We have been forced to acquire Medicaid NPI numbers and are the only employees that can actually make money for the DOE, but we weren't "essential" enough for clear guidance and rules to protect our licenses and maintain our workload. However, now that COVID has come, we magically became "essential." We were tossed a few PPE items, a pat on the back and sent to be face to face with children, while also providing synchronous webex sessions for distance learners with only a PowerPoint presentation for training. Apparently we're "essential" enough to meet IEP minutes and keep due process cases from occurring, but we need to jump through hoops to telework, protect ourselves and face increased workloads. After almost 15 years of not being valued or appreciated, we stand facing furloughs imposed that break our contract and are again "non-essential" when it's convenient for the DOE. Myself and many of my counterparts are planning on leaving the DOE if the furloughs come to pass, its more than we can bare. The shortage of Related Service Providers will worsen and it will impact Hawaii's most vulnerable keiki. Board, please advocate to prevent these furloughs because all DOE service providers, teachers, and students are essential.

Karen Kama, MS, CCC-SLP  
Speech-Language Pathologist, DOE





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony DOE Furloughs

1 message

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**merri Wada Tanji** <merriwada@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 10:04 AM

Board of Education Members,

The first point I think the Board needs to be aware of is the already articulated budget cut to the Weighted Student Formula (WSF) funds. These funds are used at the school level to fund teacher positions and student programs. The 10% cut in WSF funds means that teacher positions will be lost and programs that support student learning will need to be cut. In other words less teachers and less student programs. I'm not sure how it was rationalized that cutting at the school level was a good idea but IF the DOE and Board of Education is throwing out such things as **being student** center and preserving instructional minutes then you have missed the mark substantially. Having students sit in a room for more time without the teachers or programs available is pointless.

Now on top of this 10% cut in WSF funds, the Governor is mandating furloughs. So whatever teachers are left will have to do their current job plus the job of those teachers that have been cut with less time and less pay. I cannot fathom how this will affect our students but the message is loud and clear that they are NOT the priority.

I have been teaching for 15 years and have seen the adverse effects of the 1st furloughs and the real value that the state puts on education and their teachers. I have seen the verbal abuse that teachers endure from lawmakers when we ask to be compensated for the work we are already doing. I have seen many of my fellow teachers (great educators) defeated and broken leave the profession because of this impossible fight. I know fellow educators who are considering quitting and retiring early because of the lack of value that the state has put on education.

At our school it has already been stated that we will be losing approximately 4 positions. These teachers will most likely be teachers of the Arts. Programs will be lost, such as the makerspace and robotics, Music, Technology, PE. As the many industries move into a global market, how are we preparing our students to be able to compete with the rest of the nation and world. Will our student be prepared to work in a global market that requires innovation, creativity, resilience, and intellect? How do we build a strong nation if we remove such curriculum as history and social sciences? How do we instill character and integrity when having to eliminate humanities.

The decisions that are made right now to balance a budget will have compounding and lasting effects on the future of Hawai'i and the ability for our residents to build a competitive workforce. I urge you to consider not just what is obvious but the ripple effect of these decisions that are being made.

Mahalo,

Merri Wada Tanji





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Jill Yamasawa Fletcher** <jyamasawa@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 10:44 AM

Dear BOE,

Furloughs would make continuing being a teacher very difficult for many teachers and families. I've been a public school teacher since 2008 and I was around for the first furloughs Fridays as it was my first two years as a teacher. Furloughs are not only taking away pay from teachers, but also learning for students. I sincerely hope that you do not approve these furloughs.

Sincerely,

Jill Fletcher





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**testimony**

1 message

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**mtsukayama@hawaii.rr.com** <mtsukayama@hawaii.rr.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 10:47 AM

To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

I am submitting testimony for item VB: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees. Thank you once again for taking our testimony against furlough days for teachers, school employees and for our students.

We, my husband and I, are a two-teacher family. We have worked for the DOE for over 20 years each. Both of us will get pay cuts if furloughs are put in place. Our household income will be reduced by almost 10%. When you live on teachers' salaries that are not huge to begin with, a 10% reduction is a lot. Additionally, our own children will lose out on instructional days. Being in the education system we know that reducing planning days will affect the quality of instruction as well.

We have an 11<sup>th</sup> grader who is considering mainland colleges and another in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. We have a mortgage – in Hawaii. And monthly bills. We have been truly grateful that we have our jobs, are healthy, and aside from the social restrictions and changes to daily life, have been spared from the major effects of COVID thus far. Knock on wood. Because of this we have talked to our boys about being thoughtful and generous to others when we can. With pay cuts, we are concerned for our future and the future education of our boys, among other things. Teachers are mostly responsible and prepared people by nature. We live and plan accordingly and make decisions considering our salaries that should only increase over time, not decrease.

Teachers have jumped through hoops during the COVID-19 changes to education, and in fact always. We have teachers in their 70's who had difficulty with email now teaching classes online daily. We have new teachers who had visions of their first classes filled with students who are now experiencing something they were never taught or prepared for. We have teachers "in the middle" who have been working hard to "climb the ladder" who have worked through a strike, furloughs, and years of contracts with little to no raises. Last year, we were so excited to be in the process of that being remedied only to have it smothered by the COVID virus. We did not argue or grumble and understood that it had to be that way for now. We received the last of our pay raises for the contract period this past October only to see it taken away and then some with pending furloughs. Now we are in contract negotiations during a time when the state has to make up billions of dollars.. The outlook is bleak. And yet teachers march on. But please do know that this has all taken its toll. Teachers are head noddors and often do more and more at their own expense. I believe that teachers will not just nod their heads to pay cuts after doing so much for the school system. They will shake their heads NO. Teachers are often taken advantage of because our employer knows that when teachers are with their students, they cannot remain angry or take it out on the children they have dedicated their lives to supporting. The state has called us essential workers when it has been convenient but not when it comes to compensating teachers for the hard work they do. It is extremely frustrating to be notified of the 6-10 furlough dates especially when there still seems to be other options to consider.

While I know there are many worse off and that we all need to be a part of the solution, I do not believe furloughing teachers is the right thing to do. I have written about the effects on teachers but what about our students? How can we make statements about students losing out on instruction and not meeting standards, and at the same time lessen their already reduced number of school days? And taking away planning days from teachers is a gut punch. Teachers need to plan and prepare for students. Many schools are changing their learning models or having students move between models for the new semester. Not being given time to prepare will affect instruction and student learning also. Or, are teachers expected to do this planning during their Winter Break knowing their pay will be cut? Teachers already put in so much extra time. They deserve two full weeks of rest and relaxation after all they have done, not a pay cut and work during their time off.

We know most of you agree and have advocated for teachers this entire time. Thank you. We ask that you continue to support teachers and consider us important and necessary enough to remove the furloughs and treat us with the respect we all deserve. Thank you for your time. I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season.





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Grab and Go Meals Program

1 message

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**Amanda Langston** <Amanda.Langston@kamalaniacademy.org>  
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 11:02 AM

Aloha e Hawaii Board of Education,

I am the Po'o Kula of Kamlani academy and I am testifying today regarding the Grab and Go Meals Program. Our Charter School receives lunches from a Grab and Go Meal site. At the beginning of this school year when we found out this program was extended until the end of this school year I contacted the DOE's Hawaii Food service to inquire if this service would be provided to the students who are attending our school. We were told that this program was not extended to charter schools. This does not make sense as Hawaii DOE is being given federal dollars to provided food for all children from ages 1-18. We pick up lunches each day from this site and are charged \$6 per plate. The meals that the site is providing is the same meal that is being provided to the public and students attending school at that site for free. The meals our students are getting are far less substantial. We offered several ways to abide by rules and guidelines so that our families whom are also struggling are able to benefit from these federal dollars but continually are told this does not extend to charter schools. Then we were told because we had a vended meals contract we could not participate. We did not have an executed vended meals contract as it was never signed. There is email documentation that the Hawaii Food Service agreed there was no signed contract in August. Once the Hawaii Child Nutrition Program started to question the Hawaii Food Service about this then all of a sudden a contract was signed but still never sent to the school. This contract was backdated and signed before August. This program that the federal government provided for all children in the united states should be extended for all children. It should not matter where students are coming from or what schools they attend. If we are all here for the Keiki than this grab and go meals program should be provided to all students Hawaii DOE or Charter.



Amanda Fung (Langston)

Po'o Kula (Principal)

Kamalani Academy

[1403 California Ave.](#)

[Wahiawa HI. 96797](#)

(808) 203-2993

*"Never cease to act because you fear you may fail" ~ Queen Liliuokalani*









Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Christopher Dewhirst** <christopher.dewhirst@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 11:09 AM

Dear BOE

I am a special education teacher who has been teaching for 10 years within the Hawaii DOE. I am writing to you today to inform you of how my life will change due to furloughs and pay cuts within the DOE that have been proposed. I have worked extremely hard to reach the pay scale I am at. I am grateful that the pay scale steps are not frozen like they once were. However, even at the pay scale I am at, and with the \$10,000 extra a year awarded to special education teachers, I struggle with my monthly rent and being able to afford basic needs. I cannot create adequate savings for emergencies.

When I was 25 and single I could deal with being a poor educator. I could deal with not being able to have a reliable car, or hitchhike when I had a car repair, because it would take 2 months to save up making next to nothing. At 38 I am in a slightly better place, but not by much. I am now a father who makes slightly more, but the cost of living has increased dramatically on Maui. Especially rent. I currently live in a rental where my daughter sleeps on the couch and the shower each morning is filled with termite dust and bugs. I am able to afford this rental because the landlords do not ask the going price due to the condition of the rental. They know it is decrepit but I still pay a little over half of my monthly income towards it. I look online at rentals hoping I may find a 2 bedroom or even a nicer one bedroom so that my daughter doesn't have to sleep on the couch and can have her own space to do her school work. The cheapest 2 bdrm rental is more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of what I make. A nicer 1 bedroom is just under  $\frac{3}{4}$  of what I make.

Taking away any amount of pay from me puts my ability to provide for myself and my daughter at risk. I am fortunate. My daughter still doesn't have her own bedroom but she at least has a couch to sleep on. If these cuts and furloughs go through my daughter will be sleeping on the back seat of my truck parked by the beach. Please understand that many of us are struggling with living situations, even with the current pay. Cutting our pay puts more teachers at risk of homelessness and turnover.

One last thing that I would like you to reflect on is how the quality of living for the family of an educator is worse than the quality of living for a family receiving assistance/ benefits. Why would I continue to teach and risk being homeless when I could be unemployed or work a lower wage job in order to receive HUD and provide my daughter her own bedroom?

Please respect education and learning. Show the community that teachers and education are valued by standing up for us and not taking away money we so desperately need just to get by. One of the saddest things I have ever experienced is telling my daughter not to become a teacher because I don't want her to end up struggling financially like myself.

Sincerely,  
Christopher Dewhirst  
Kalama Intermediate, Maui  
(808) 936-3838



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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

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## please do not furlough us

1 message

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**Ocean Breezes** <oceanbreezes77@gmail.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 11:33 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Besides furloughs further reducing student contact time, I also am worried financially since I also help support my special needs brother.

Please do not furlough us.

Thank you.





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**testimony**

1 message

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**Dana Wetmore** <danawetmorespeechpath@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 11:47 AM

I'm writing as a previous member of the DOE Related Services team, as a fellow SLP to those still working at the DOE and on behalf of the special education students that benefit from related service providers.

While I was working for the schools, we (SLPs, OTs, PTs) requested increases in salary or reimbursement of certification fees to match our mainland counterparts; however the DOE declined. There has been such a severe shortage of providers that SLPs cover multiple schools providing not just therapy, but evaluations, consultations, all while doing their best to connect with students, families and team members, but they've never been "essential." In fact even though the staffing shortage has been more dismal than the special education teacher counterparts, the DOE said they weren't interested in offering the same incentives for retaining and recruiting Related Service Providers.

Related service providers have been forced to acquire Medicaid NPI numbers and are the only employees that can actually make money for the DOE, but weren't "essential" enough for clear guidance and rules to protect their licenses and maintain their workload. However, now that COVID has come, they magically became "essential." Related Service Providers were tossed a few PPE items, a pat on the back and sent to be face to face with children, while also providing synchronous webex sessions for distance learners with only a PowerPoint presentation for training. Apparently they're "essential" enough to meet IEP minutes and keep due process cases from occurring, but they need to jump through hoops to telework, protect themselves and face increased workloads.

**I left my position as a DOE speech language pathologist in October 2020 because of the specific reasons listed above and the associated negative consequences that impacted my mental well-being, my effectiveness as a therapist, and the impacts it had on my students.** I was servicing up to 80 students in multiple schools because there was no other SLP available in the district - that comes out to over 30 hours of services a week. I had to participate in IEP meetings lasting up to 6 hours during the school day to work with contentious parents on collaborating and creating IEPs. In order to catch up with immense workload, I was frequently working up to 10 hour work days. And above all, the demand impacted my ability to plan for my students, provide accurate service minutes, and meet the diverse needs of my students.

I know for a fact that other related service providers are feeling the same negative impacts that lead to my resignation. The shortage of Related Service Providers will worsen and it will impact Hawaii's most vulnerable keiki. Board, please advocate to prevent these furloughs because all DOE service providers, teachers, and students are essential.

Thank you,  
Dana Wetmore



Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Jodi Kunimitsu and I am a math teacher at Maui High School. I am writing in strong opposition to the recently announced furlough plan for DOE employees. My husband and I are both DOE teachers. This is the second time in a little over 10 years that we are both being furloughed by the state. For me, this is not only about money. This is about respect for our profession and for the people you always expect to "save the children".

The public education system in Hawaii is dying a slow and painful death. You expect the system to survive off of teachers "goodwill" and "big hearts". You know very well that our students would not be doing as well as they are, if not for teachers putting in way more time past their contract hours and putting up their own money to supply their classrooms. Yet, there is NEVER any acknowledgement of that by the people sitting at the very top of the DOE. Instead, we are ALWAYS called upon to sacrifice "for the kids". Let's be real - the people doing the most "for the kids" are the school level employees. And here we are, once again, being asked to sacrifice - in the middle of an unprecedented school year - one in which we have sacrificed more than ever before to make distance and hybrid learning work for our students. No one has acknowledged the amount of time and energy teachers have put forth to make this year work for our students. No one has acknowledged the stress and mental toll this has taken on teachers. We are expected to just "keep on keeping on...for the kids". If there has been any acknowledgement of these things, it has been overshadowed by all the slaps in the face by the DOE - us having to fight for safe working conditions, fight for telework, fight for resources - all we have been doing this school year is fighting with the DOE to get some respect and safe working conditions. Imagine that - the most valuable and necessary employees in the school having to fight with their employer about basic working conditions - and now being slapped in the face AGAIN with furloughs.

You see, the problem here is that you think every employee will just suck it up and stay in the DOE "for the kids"....and the ones that choose to go? Well, we'll survive without them, right? WRONG!!! There are lots of highly qualified teachers leaving, because they are either tired of being treated like this and have better opportunities or they just can't afford to stay here in Hawaii. Do you see a long line of applicants waiting to take their place? I don't. We've had a teacher shortage for far too long and haven't been able to recover. Do you see what I mean about public education dying a slow and painful death?

When are we going to stop making excuses for having to starve our already dying public education system and do something about it? The public education system is on a ventilator and we, the employees are the exhausted, overworked medical staff trying desperately to keep it alive. Please stop killing it with furloughs and budget cuts!!!!

Sincerely,

Jodi Kunimitsu  
Kihei, Maui





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Support related service providers, Stop Furloughs**

1 message

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**Tricia Kagimoto** <kagibuya@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 12:08 PM

Dear Board Members,

I am a Related Service Provider for students with special needs under the federal IDEA act. We are mandated to service students based on the student's Individualized Education Plan according to each student's need. This includes OT, PT and Speech services. With the upcoming order to furlough us and reduce the instructional days and planning days, you are only causing harm to the state's public education system. We hope the BOE will support us in stopping the furloughs.

Related service providers provide direct services and assessments to the special needs population, and consultation to staff. We are also required to document every minute that the student is serviced. The furlough days will cause a negative impact on the providers as it decreases the days we are able to service the students as well as eliminates the time needed to complete required documentation. It is already difficult to recruit and retain providers and this causes existing providers to be overworked. More providers will leave and less will apply causing more of a strain on your related service providers. We do not have the liberty of getting substitutes and when we take leave due to illness or vacation we must return only to have the burden of making up all the missed services during our time off. The furloughs will cause the same hardship of forcing us to continue to see the same caseload with less work days. That is not fair. Teachers do not have to make up their missed instructional days but related service providers are required to. Related service providers are Medicaid providers that allow the DOE to receive funds based on our services to the students. Can't the DOE use these funds to help supplement us instead of furloughing us?

During the pandemic, it was forced upon us to figure out how to service the students in a variety of ways including virtually and in-person. We have been forced to manage multiple schools differing schedules while ensuring all students are provided the needed services. There has been an increase in meetings and paperwork as a result of Covid-19. We are all barely surviving to get the students seen and work done. We were hoping relief was coming soon instead we got the news that our pay will be cut and more work will be put on us. With the news that furloughs will start on January 1, it is disheartening to think that the state does not care about the children who are the future of our state. Nor do they care about the ones providing services to educate these children.

During the start of Covid-19, employees of DOE were considered essential. When stay at home orders were made, educating our Keiki continued. Related services have been providing in-person services and are on the "front lines" being potentially exposed to your highly vulnerable students. We have worked tirelessly to do our job. Maybe the State of Hawaii should do the same and figure out a way to manage their budget to support your providers who have been working day in and out to educate and provide services to the students of Hawaii. BOE please support your educators including related service providers to stop the furloughs and show your support to all of us who have done all we can to ensure your students are being serviced.

Sincerely,  
Tricia Shibuya-Kagimoto





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## How furloughs will affect me!

1 message

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**Michelle Pila** <mtus@hawaii.edu>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 1:04 PM

Aloha BOE board members,

As a DOE employee I barely make enough as it is to get by, now the proposed furlough is set to take effect beginning January 4, 2021 and continue for the next four (4 ) years. I will be applying for state benefits such as SNAP and financial assistance from the state because I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PAY MY BILLS, for groceries, doctor visits, gas, and rent. Is the Governor taking a furloughed pay cut as well As other members of his cabinet?? I think not. How about Board members? Elected officials? Who else is taking a pay cut besides the DOE workers?? I would really like to know how taking from the people like me who makes the least amount of money helps our state. Why are we being penalized for the shortfall during the pandemic?? Why wasn't more covid funds used? Why were they hoarding it? Claims of missing unemployment monies in the hundred thousands go missing, highly unlikely. The people of Hawai'i is being robbed by people who want to be elected then don't work for the good of all the people, all constituents, not just the wealthy!! I am beyond pissed that I will be furloughed when I was asked to show up for work to provide direct services to students in less than 6 feet away, no social distancing, I did even though I was scared. I will be another person on the verge of homelessness. This is sad. Already having lost one income in my household, to lose even more when it's already a struggle is more than unfair. My household will be directly affected with more loss of income and I don't receive any assistance in any form from anyone. I am highly considering another job, field, and or even relocating. Feeling like having to do this because this will devastate my family's lives, many people, it will devastate communities, It will have more parents away from their children just to put food on the table. Do you currently have trouble paying bills and or putting food on the table?? There should be some sort of a criteria for something like this instead of across the board because the people on the bottom end of pay range will be in more debt and have a bigger burden than you could ever imagine. (That's me!). There needs to be a better solution, you were elected to sit on this board to be an asset to the people of Hawai'i! The Representatives that we're also elected, I feel has the same duty to the people of Hawai'i. In addition to many financial burdens this will bring, it will take more time away from students. It will impact them and their households as well. More time loss to make up a budget that no one had any control over except the people sitting in office. What the hell! Find solutions, legalize [REDACTED], there are other ways, raise hotel tax, legalize marijuana and tax it like in Denver, Colorado. It is a major source of their economy.. I just can't believe that this is the best our leaders can do. Which all you sitting on a board should be deeply ashamed and at this point aren't leaders. This is sent from a very frustrated and broke person who shows up to do her job daily!





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## NO PERSONAL INFORMATION Testimony 12/17/2020 Full Board Meeting Discussion Item B, Action Item B

1 message

[REDACTED]  
to: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 1:29 PM

NO PERSONAL INFORMATION  
Testimony  
12/17/2020  
Full Board Meeting  
Discussion Item B, Action Item B

Aloha Board,

**Please redact my identifying information, including my email address.** I realize this is late, but I have again agonized over whether to submit testimony due to concerns about retaliation. I hope you will still consider my input.

I am submitting testimony related to Discussion Item B and Action Item B. I am an educational officer who is not in a school, i.e. complex area/state office. My spouse is an educational assistant who works with medically fragile children in a public elementary school.

There is no easy way to address the dire economic situation the state is in at the moment. There are realities that can't be sugar coated or ignored. This is a topic that requires careful consideration and there are no signs that such consideration has been paid by the Governor or the Superintendent. I'd ask you to consider the following:

**Whose interests are being served?** We have been told constantly throughout this pandemic that the reopening of the economy is dependent on educators, that we have obligations to provide academic and wraparound services, that teaching and learning of social studies and science are more important than ever for our society to function. And yet, predictably, the balancing of the economy falls on the backs of schools. Teachers, aides, trainers, administrators, custodians, cafeteria staff, librarians, counselors, and many others are being asked to make do with less both professionally and personally. Does this serve our children, our 'ohanas, our future?

**Have all other options been examined and exhausted?** It seems as though this has not happened. There are state employees who are not being asked to face furloughs. I have seen that those of us who could be considered middle-class have been left to squabble and in-fight over how a ~10% pay cut may impact our ability to survive depending on where we live, if we are in a dual- or single-income household, etc. In the meantime, we have HIDOE employees whose **regular salaries** would put them below the poverty line if they have a single income. Note, however, that even the highest paid HIDOE employees make a fraction of what other high-paid state employees make. There is no simple solution, but surely there are ways to approach furloughs and cuts in ways that are more equitable, yet perhaps not equal across the board, and in ways that do not plunge our middle- and low-income families into debt and despair. Further, there may be ways to cut expenditures that are not salaries. I know salaries make up a huge proportion of our expenses, but deeper cuts made carefully with a scalpel might allow for more shallow cuts elsewhere.

**What is the role of leadership at this time?** Dr. Kishimoto has consistently advocated that she should be evaluated gently in the context of a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. Surely we are all doing our best at this time. However, those of us in the field are expected to deliver at a high level, when circumstances have made our own jobs difficult and literally put our lives in danger, all for proportionally lower salaries with potential pay decreases that will impact our lives and livelihoods in real ways. Additionally, Dr. Kishimoto continues to misstep, telling [untruths about the furlough situation](#), cheerfully touting state accomplishments in what appeared to be a [self-promotional video](#) that could serve as evidence for her own evaluation, never acknowledging or apologizing for the disaster that has been Acellus, and engaging employees in a glib holiday toast. Only someone who has not ever been a K-12 teacher would imply that taking away teacher work and professional learning days lessens the impact on students. Dr. Kishimoto is not a middle-manager who needs to



cheerlead her staff in the face of ongoing and imminent crises to keep up morale; she is the top-level leader who is actively deciding to endanger the lives and futures of so many of her employees and those we serve.

I will end with the personal impact by saying this. My family is stuck. We will be impacted because we have no other choice than to be taken advantage of, and I think the Governor and Superintendent are well aware that this is the situation for so many. There is nowhere else professionally for me to go in Hawaii based on my specialized training and skills and the lack of other potential jobs being posted because of the state of the economy. My spouse perhaps could go back to working retail part-time, but retail hours are scaled back and first priority is rightfully given to those who work retail full time. We would have difficulty moving out of state because of our family and support network here. So as we prepare to take on the expense of preschool for our young child, at the same time as having both our salaries cut, we will just suck it up, because we have to.

Education is a caring profession and educators are often taken advantage of because of this. Please know that this is not just a cut to our salaries, but a deep wound to the profession and to our collective futures.

Mahalo,

HIDOE Educational Officer





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Sanoe Kalahiki** <skalahiki01@gmail.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 2:24 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Mu name is Sanoe Kalahiki and I am a special education teacher at Castle High School. I feel that teachers need to be treated more like essential workers (especially SPED teachers). Parents need their children in school. I am father of 5 and trying to work and have kids at home doing school work while I'm on my campus is very difficult. Beyond the personal financial repercussions, these furloughs will not only increase the amount of instruction time lost for our students but the time that we have as SPED teachers to complete our work and meet our FEDERALLY MANDATED deadlines will also be decreased. The federal government will not adjust because of our states lack of vision. As teachers we are already under paid these furloughs will not help the situation. High teacher turnover will continue be a problem. This can lead to lack of rapport built between student and teacher, which can directly affect student progress and success.

mahalo,

Sanoe Kalahiki





Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Sienna Makarewicz** <ohanamaka@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 7:48 PM

I am so tired of this 🙄

Sent from my iPad





Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

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## Please don't furlough

1 message

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**Tovah Stafford** <piscesmermaid808@yahoo.com>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 2:59 PM

I'm barely surviving right now and if I have a furlough there's no way I can continue to do my job and live in Hawaii.





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY**

1 message

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**J A** <janearakaki@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 3:40 PM

Aloha BOE,

I know I am a few hours late, but I hope this testimony will still be accepted.

I find it very unfair that teachers are asked to furlough just because the State did not do a good job at budgeting. Education is the first to sacrifice when things are bad, but are last (or most times, do not even have the chance) to reap the benefits when times are good.

Test scores from Hawaii children are low compared to other states; this was the case before COVID. If teachers are forced to furlough, our children will suffer greatly.

There has to be another way for the State to cover their losses. Freeze hiring, ask Governor Ige and other higher ranking government officials to take a bigger pay cut. Greater sacrifices must be made from top officials.

Teachers greatly helped the economy of other lines of business throughout the pandemic; we must now fight and help our teachers!

Please rethink furlough for our teachers. They are what will shape our children to be our future.

Mahalo,  
Jane Arakaki





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Rachel Reyes** <rachel.reyes@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 3:42 PM

Rachel Reyes  
First Grade Teacher at Kihei Elementary

Aloha,

For the last 13 years, I have been a kindergarten and first grade teacher at Kihei Elementary. I started as a young single woman and am now a wife and mother of two boys who also attend Kihei Elementary.

My family has lived paycheck to paycheck over the last 13 years because of high rent and low pay. Beginning this school year with a raise was a blessing and I thought, "maybe I'll actually be able to start saving for my kids to go to college". News of this furlough is such a blow to my family that for the first time in 13 years I am having to make the decision of staying in Maui, my home that I love, or leaving.

I love my students here in Kihei and put my all into teaching them. They love me too! Kids in my class feel welcome and loved every day. I don't want to leave, but have to choose a future for my own children. That future is looking impossible here if the furloughs happen.

Mahalo for listening,  
Rachel Reyes

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony Teacher Furlough

1 message

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**raynettek@yahoo.com** <raynettek@yahoo.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 3:47 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a DOE first grade teacher and I am writing in regards to Governor Ige's announcement of teacher furloughs.

If you are reading this, I am hoping that you understand that teachers in Hawaii are struggling with the cost of living and our sad paycheck. Most of our paycheck goes back into the classroom because we CARE about our students. Most of us put our STUDENTS before our OWN children and family. To furlough teachers is insulting and unrealistic and will be a hardship on all teachers. How do you expect us to live? Most of us, including myself, are living paycheck to paycheck. But yet, we give so much to our students, to the DOE and to the State of Hawaii. To furlough us, is a slap in the face.

This school has been very rough on myself and many more teachers in the DOE. We are BURNT OUT , we are TIRED and EXHUSTED! We are doing the BEST we can to serve our community and students with what we got. Many of my teacher friends and coworkers want to call it quits!!! I'm sure if you allow Governor Ige to furlough us NOW, you are going to see many teachers quit in a heartbeat. What will you do when there's a mass of QUALIFIED teachers leaving this profession? What type of quality education will students get then? We are already stretched thin, and we are asking for your help!!!

If you believe that our keiki are the future, help protect the profession that is teaching the future! If you want quality citizens for the future, help teachers NOW!!!

Thank you,  
A concerned DOE Teacher



December 16, 2020

To: State of Hawaii  
Board of Education

From: James Logue, M.P.A.  
Honolulu, HI

Re: State of Hawaii, Board of Education Furlough Announcement.

Aloha,

This letter comes to you in **STRONG OPPOSITION** to the Board of Education's announcement to implement furloughs. As a current employee of the State of Hawaii I am one of the thousands of public servants who will be negatively impacted by the Governor's decision that the furloughs are a necessary step at this time despite opposing research presented to his administration by experts.

The Board of Education's decision to furlough our dedicated public servants conveys the impression that our state leaders have little to no regard for our keiki's education and future opportunities. Such a decision would not only be taking money away from many families who are already struggling but would dramatically decrease the quality and efficiency of educational programs that thousands of students rely upon across the state.

The State of Hawaii has been trying to come up with solutions to what has been deemed a "*Teacher Shortage Crisis*" as our highly qualified college graduates leave the islands, their families, and their friends, to pursue careers in education on the mainland. Deciding at this critical time to furlough workers would accelerate the rate at which our underpaid teachers and staff flee the state in pursuit of better opportunities. This will cause a further decline in the quality of education of our students as well as a decline in the moral of our hardworking teachers and education staff.

We need money in the hands of our people to spend in our local economy. We need people spending money at our businesses so that other industries can thrive and continue providing jobs to other residents. We need our public servants to be paid their due wages as agreed upon in their Collective Bargaining Agreements.

We don't need more people struggling to pay rent, falling further behind on bills, accruing more debt, and not having disposable income to support our local economy.

I urge the Board of Education to think about the disastrous long-term impacts of such a decision and to please reconsider their proposed furloughs.

Mahalo for your time.

**James Logue, M.P.A.**  
**Honolulu, Hawaii**





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Impact on Furloughs Testimony

1 message

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**Natalia Steinhorst-Soler** <kumunatalia@kawaikini.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 4:42 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha e BOE,

I am a special education teacher at a Hawaiian Immersion Charter on Kaua'i.

I have been in public education since 2002. I am certified in special education, math, general education, and bilingual education. I have a Master's in Special Education and I am currently completing a second Master's in Educational Leadership and Administration.

I recall being worried as a college student watching teacher pay being affected by Governor Cayetano when there was a teacher strike. That scared me about coming into the profession. Then with Governor Lingle with the failing furlough Fridays where I made more money cleaning oceanfront vacation rentals in one day than in a whole week of teaching as a beginning teacher. Then with Governor Abercrombie who had a background in education and we all thought would be an ally, but he cut our pay with the DLWOP days, losing pay and taking away important time that teachers need to prepare and perform their many duties. Now here we are again with Governor Ige and unforeseen circumstances due to a pandemic.

The question I ask at this point is, what are our values and priorities as a state? What do we hold sacred? Because in my career I can say that education is not a value or a priority, it is the first and most frequently cut item in any legislator's budget.

In March my husband lost his full-time job and has not been able to regain employment, my tenants have not been able to maintain their income, so I felt blessed that thanks to my income I would be able to hold down the fort until other areas of the economy recover. To my surprise, this year I have been asked to do more work and hold more IEPs than any other year. I was denied my ability to reclassify by DOE through my Chamide University Master's in Educational Leadership &amp; Administration because I am employed at a charter school and now I am looking at a reduction in pay due to unilateral furloughs.

Enough is enough. We can't say we value education and keiki, that we wish to reduce homelessness, crime, drug abuse, and wonder why there is a teacher shortage when time after time the very systems meant to support education, keiki, and educators are the same systems that sabotage, cut, and defund us.

Please be coherent with your vision and mission. Be respectful of us as professionals, be fair to our contract and the bargaining process.

We have gone above and beyond during this pandemic to be disregarded and neglected by our own leaders.

Sincerely,

Natalia Steinhorst-Soler

--

A hui hou,

Kumu Natalia  
Kumu Ko'o  
Kawaikini NCPCS  
808 632 2032

"O ka 'olu'olu e hau'oli ia." 'Ōlelo no'eau

"Kindness is loaning someone your strength instead of reminding them of their weakness" Andy Stanley





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Furlough Testimony**

1 message

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**Sina P. Pili** <pili.sina.p@gmail.com>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 5:03 PM

Dear DOE,

I work hard fulfilling my job responsibilities and taking a cut for all my hardwork degrades my value I give to the DOE for our students. In addition, the cost of living in Hawaii is already high. The pay we receive is already not enough to sustain living in this costly state. Cutting our pay will only put my family into a more financial struggle. In addition, my husband is a state worker and we are looking at about not being able to pay for our 2 car payments a month with furloughs, or my daughters daycare costs and we both are essential workers, or all of our utility bills. The furloughs will put our family in a financial crisis and we are considering of relocating.

Please don't furlough.

Sina P. Pili





Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

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## Impact of Furloughs

1 message

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**carol thomley** <thomleyteacher808@yahoo.com>  
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 5:27 PM

I will retire!  
Shame, Hawaii's BOE needs to cut the fat off the top.

Sent from my iPhone





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Furloughs for Teachers

1 message

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**Shaunna Au** <shaunna72@aol.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 5:47 PM

Hi!

My name is Shaunna Au. My son is 5 years old. He's autistic and is now attending school every day because he needs the face to face interaction. He is currently still transitioning into the regular kindergarten class from the SPED preschool class. He does have a one on one. Since he only has his kindergarten class on Wednesdays and Thursdays, he is still going to his SPED preschool class on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday just to keep on going. He was doing distanced learning for a few weeks in the beginning but that did not work. It threw everything off for him. He really needs structure and routine. If that doesn't happen he will go off track and then it starts all over from square one. His SPED teachers are key for him and so is attending class. It is already hard just trying to get special services for him. The waiting lists are a year or two because of the pandemic and the staffing at multiple places. I have called all over. That's why his teachers are really important. I ask to please highly reconsider furloughing our teachers. Especially for my son they play a big role in his life. The less he attends class, the harder it is of him to keep on track. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,  
Shaunna Au  
Sent from my iPhone





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Furloughs**

1 message

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**Cathy Cummings** <ccummings021415@yahoo.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:17 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I bring home 66.95 a day as a elementary school clerk, now the 66.95 is before they take more money out for furloughs. But it is so interesting that earlier this year I was deemed essential but now you want to furlough me but not other workers and exempt them from furloughs, that is so wrong, we were important when you needed schools opened so we were essential but now let's take almost 10% of our paycheck. I see why so many people get depressed. We are at a place where we don't make enough to survive but we don't qualify for food stamps or help. But the unemployed got an extra 600.00 they ended up making more staying home. How about helping us out instead of taking more away from us, this is the 2nd time we are losing days from our paycheck. We went through this years ago. And lge is thinking maybe 4 yrs of furloughs, I don't care he's taking a pay cut he makes a lot more also.

Sent from my iPad





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Carmen Kinny** <carmenkinny@yahoo.com>  
To: testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:30 PM

**Testimony**

I'm a special education teacher at a public elementary school in Hawai'i. I'm writing testimony regarding furloughs. I was born and raised here, and received my teaching credentials (paid for by the DOE) from UH Manoa. I have nowhere else to call home, but am now considering moving to the mainland to try teaching there.

What is being done to special education in public schools here is unacceptable. The amount of time special education teachers are allowed to give during the school day to their special needs students keeps diminishing with each incorrect and unintelligent state-wide decision made.

The push to put as many students as possible in inclusion, regardless of their suitable class placement based on their needs or academic level, cut their on-level learning time in half. Then, decisions to cut the special ed budget by ten percent were announced, which might leave all public schools with so few special education teachers that they will be forced to be full-time IEP writers, leaving students with special needs to be babysat more than taught in general ed rooms. Now, furloughs are announced, which will definitely cut the learning time of students again.

With all of these cuts to special ed instructional time, the children who need the most academic learning are getting the least. I am someone working in the thick of it, and I am very concerned that a much larger percentage of students with special needs will end up illiterate for life because of the unintelligent and greedy decisions being made now. Illiteracy will exclude these children from life, not include them in it. Studies have shown that a high number of prison inmates are illiterate. The choices we make for these children now can have devastating consequences for them for life. And, they will be living right beside all of us. The choices we make for them affect humanity, and can have devastating consequences for our society as well.

Please consider your choices. Thank you.





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Pending Furloughs

1 message

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**dupontohana@hawaiiantel.net** <dupontohana@hawaiiantel.net>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 6:36 PM

Aloha,

As an Educational Assistant in the DOE, and a member of the HGEA, I would like to add my testimony to others, who will be negatively impacted by the Governor's plan to furlough state workers, beginning in January of 2021.

How will these furloughs affect my family? Well, my husband and I are already struggling with the high cost of living. The State's mismanagement of the monies that we have paid with our hard-earned taxes, are now, once again, being placed on the backs of the people. One suggestion, which we apply to our own family budget, is to learn to live within your means, and trim the fat. Governor Ige, and all those in charge, can start with their own paychecks. It is sad, that the very people who work to keep the community safe, educated, healthy, and running, are considered the fat that needs to be trimmed. Hewa loa.

Our school is already struggling to keep our students educated and safe, and now, we are being asked to sacrifice more. Many of our older, more experienced teachers are leaving in droves. They see how difficult it will be, to run their classrooms without the support of EAs and PPTs. I would love to see the Governor, his staff, and members of the legislature, come visit, and teach a class of Special Needs students without support. They wouldn't be able to last a day; there would be more lawsuits, and we'd be in an even deeper hole.

If I had enough savings, I would love to retire, but I'd have to move away from the lands of my ancestors. There is no way that I could survive here, where you cater to visitors, and forget about the people you represent. Sadly, like my children who left the islands over a decade ago, I, too, may have to pack up and leave.

Please, reconsider these furloughs, and how it will affect your state workers. If you have no other options, then at least do things the right way. Make things pono. Encourage Superintendent Christina Kishimoto to be transparent and honest with us. When her contract is up, send her packing, as she has done nothing for those who labor in education. Use the correct process of collective bargaining regarding these furloughs, as it is the constitutional right of public employees. Sit down and talk to those who represent us, and see the value in all the little "cogs" that make up the community you were chosen to represent.

U'ilani DuPont





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Beth Ann Kauwe** <bethkauwe@icloud.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:04 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I am testifying on general business meeting discussion item VB Presentation on questions regarding Dept of Education furloughs.

I am writing to urge you to reject the proposed furloughs for teachers. At a time when we cannot retain teachers, when we are asked to do more and reinvent our teaching, thoughts of docking our pay are on the table ? This is incredibly insulting and disheartening. How can there not be more creative ways to balance the budget?

I personally am struggling with paying the mortgage and bills with my husband having lost his job last spring. Due to this loss, I took on extra course work to move over on the salary guide only to learn it won't help if furloughs are instituted. Aside from harming my financial situation and my spirit (as we were once deemed ESSENTIAL workers), this will hurt our Keiki. How can we think of taking more days away from their education? They deserve MORE time in school, more continuity of learning, and more stability.

I lived through the 2010 furloughs and never regained my step on the guide. This blatant disrespect makes me want to retire early! Why is education always the first to be cut?

Say no to furloughs if you care about the future for all of us!

Sincerely,

Beth Kauwe

Sent from my iPhone





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Roberts, Moyrah** <moyrah.roberts@kalakauamiddle.org>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 7:26 PM

This school year has already been one of the toughest with the changes due to COVID-19--then this. What next? Furloughs are just "the straw that may break the camel's back". I mean, how much more stress and frustration are teachers to endure without completely breaking? I'm trying my best to "hang in there", but what is the incentive? I like teaching, and I like helping students learn, but I have to live also.

*This email is property of the of the Hawaii Department of Education and is not for personal use. Emails may be monitored for Acceptable Use Guideline compliance and security.*





Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

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## Too soon

1 message

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**Deanna Kackley** <dkackley@hawaii.edu>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:20 PM

Make a determination of the US congress Bipartisan support for schools before you decide anything...furloughs, really?





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony member for 10years**

1 message

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**Cheryl Mckee** <cherylmckee2014@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:26 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I have been a member for 10 years now. I am struggling to pay my bills , mortgage, car payments medical bills. My husband just got out of the hospital and got meds that he takes. 1 of his mb edicine cost 1000 per dose another one cost 500 per prescription that is a lot of money. I just took a 12 month BT position and i will get furlough 10 times instead of 6. I got a child in college which i Pay out of pocket another one that going to graduate this school year and a 4th grader. My college chold helps my fourth grade with onlihe studies and ends up stayinh up all night doing her homevwork  
I am struggling from the furloughs that was implement by linda lingle.





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**(no subject)**

1 message

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**Cupid Shinyama** <shinyama@hotmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:28 PM

To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

How are WE SUPPOSED to live on imposed furlough days that will cut our pay almost 10% ???..Ige makes more than any of us EAs and teachers and he and his cabinet members are gonna take the same amount of about 10% their salary??? I struggle to pay my rent...car payment...GROCERIES...disabled parent care???

Sent from [Outlook](#)





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Re: Furlough Testimony Copied into Email**

1 message

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**Elizabeth Baclayon** <sedgekitty1608@gmail.com>  
To: Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 8:44 PM

Testimony

With respect to the BOE,

I am an immunocompromised, cancer surviving teacher with 28 years experience in the middle school classroom. I testify that the impending furloughs will destroy my family financially while the risk of contracting Covid 19 from face to face teaching will quite possibly destroy my life. This double whammy will force me to leave my beloved profession unless the furloughs are stopped. PPE cannot protect my bank account, children's needs, home, car, etc. from devastating loss of pay.

As if teaching during a deadly pandemic weren't horrible enough, and with all students returning for face to face blended instruction after winter break, now I am expected to not only die while carrying out my job, but to do so for significantly less pay. This heinous situation will be the final straw in my decision to retire early. I cannot afford to do this, but I also cannot afford to die and leave my family without a main source of financial support and my loved ones without their Mother, wife, and sister.

In the 28 years I've dedicated to the DOE and my beloved students, while teaching full time and raising a family I earned my Masters Degree in US History, won a national fellowship from the James Madison Memorial Foundation and completed all rigorous academic and professional requirements to earn the esteemed title of national "Teacher- Scholar of the U.S. Constitution." I received letters of commendation for excellence in teaching from Congresswoman Mazie Hirono, the late Senator Daniel K. Inouye, and former U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. I was nominated for Teacher of the Year twice. Of my own initiative, I created and teach a Holocaust Studies class to address bullying and racism at my middle school campus.

I have taught with passion and loyalty and planned to teach joyfully in the classroom well beyond my 30 years. Furloughs will destroy this plan and deprive students of a highly qualified, experienced teacher. Even before the pandemic Hawaii had a chronic teacher shortage precisely because of decades of furloughs, pay cuts, and step freezes. Who will replace me, an 18 year old with only a high school diploma or GED and no professional educational training or experience? How will that benefit Hawaii's keiki?

The financial devastation wreaked by these new furloughs on top of risking my immunocompromised health teaching face to face after being denied telework (despite my Pulmonologist advocating for telework to keep me from Covid related death) will be the death knoll in my teaching career, at least in Hawaii. I do not exaggerate. Like thousands of other teachers I have been through the educators' financial armageddon that this State has thrown us into many times before in my nearly 3 decades of teaching here. Payroll lags, Furlough Fridays, pay cuts, reclassification freezes, pay freezes, step increase freezes. I am still recovering financially from those, on top of which I am still paying off cancer related medical debt from ever increasing health insurance premiums. Now, I'm expected to lose a minimum of 6 full days of pay? With no proportional decrease in workload, in fact the workload will be worsened because the furloughs take away crucial planning time. In fact, our first furlough day will eradicate our teacher work day of January 4, which



we desperately need to safely prepare our classrooms for the significant transition from distance learning to blended face to face instruction.

As if the nonchalance of the DOE and Governor in their tacit acceptance of teachers' lives as expendable and collateral damage weren't vile enough, now we must risk our lives for less pay. Who will suffer? Our families, our children, our students, and our local economy. Furloughs are premature when our State legislature has authorized the State to borrow money, and Congress is working on a stimulus bill. Here is an example of the financial fall out affecting keiki:

As I tried in vain to rearrange furniture to accommodate 6 feet social distancing (knowing a recent scientific study from Korea demonstrated Covid infections at 21 feet and farther), I placed a small bottle of hand sanitizer, a container of sanitizing wipes, and a box of kleenex on each desk. That is all that I have. These will run out in two weeks or less of students' return to school January 5. With the furloughs I CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO BUY THESE SAFETY SUPPLIES OUT OF MY OWN POCKET AND THERE IS NO MONEY IN OUR SCHOOL BUDGET FOR CONTINUOUS REPLACEMENT! LIVES WILL BE IMPERILED!

This is just one example of how the furloughs will affect students. Teachers will no longer be able to make up the shortfalls in resources and supplies with their own money!

Teachers will quit. Veteran teachers like myself, who are highly qualified and proven to be highly effective in the classroom, will retire early.

Teachers, like myself, will lose their cars, their homes, and our children will have to leave college because their parents can no longer help cover the cost.

The irony is this: furloughed teachers have NO money to shop in our own local economy yet we are one of the primary reasons the economy is able to reopen because the State is sacrificing our health so that children can return to school in order that their parents can return to work.

First our physical lives are imperiled by the State so that teachers can serve as babysitters for reopening the economy, and now our financial lives are sacrificed as well, and both are done quite callously as demonstrated by taking away a crucial day of planning to prepare our classrooms safely for the return of students.

With furloughs, God forbid we die from Covid while teaching face to face in our classroom because now our families won't even be able to afford to bury us properly.

I implore you to stop these shortsighted furloughs and beseech the Governor and the DOE to use State surplus and await Federal stimulus monies to cover the shortfalls.

Thank you for your time,

Elizabeth Baclayon

Grade 8 US History and Grades 7 & 8 Holocaust Studies Teacher

CKMS, Kaua'i

On Wed, Dec 16, 2020, 3:53 PM Testimony BOE <[testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov](mailto:testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov)> wrote:

We are unable to open and save your testimony. Please either copy it into your email or submit it as a pdf. not a word doc.

Thank you,  
Board Office

On Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 3:44 PM Elizabeth Baclayon (via Google Docs) <[sedgekitty1608@gmail.com](mailto:sedgekitty1608@gmail.com)> wrote:



sedgekitty1608@gmail.com has invited you to **edit** the following document:

 [Furlough Testimony](#)

[Open in Docs](#)

sedgekitty1608@gmail.com is outside your organization.

Google Docs: Create and edit documents online.

Google LLC, [1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA](#)

You have received this email because sedgekitty1608@gmail.com shared a document with you from Google Docs.







Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Testimony

1 message

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**Cameron Inouye-Ng** <cameroninouyeng@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 9:42 PM

To whom this may concern,

Growing up here in Hawaii, I was in high school during the time of "Furlough Friday's" and I thought it was great as a student. But now, as a third year teacher, I am afraid for these days. These furlough days are not only going to affect me, they are going to significantly impact my students. My students are losing out on instructional time as is. They are coming to school face-to-face twice a week and have virtual learning the other three days. When these furloughs are put into place, they will be losing out on more time to interact with me, their teacher. During this time of distance teaching, I have noticed that some of my shy students felt more comfortable asking questions through WebEx rather than in person. And by taking away these learning times, my students are losing out on an opportunity to ask for help.

If we are expected to take standardized tests this year, my students will not be ready. Right now they are getting half of the curriculum since we are in the blended learning model. And now you want us to teach them everything before standardized testing this spring?! I do not understand how you expect us to cram everything in this shortened school year for standardized testing.

These furloughs would affect me personally too. I am still paying for my car loan, student loans, and I am trying to tie up loose ends with my late mom's unexpected financial issues. These furlough days are not just days off, these are days where I cannot work to save for my future. I have plans of buying a house here and with this situation, my dreams are being put on hold again.

Please reconsider the furloughs, not just for us teachers, but for our students who will one day be the leaders.

Best,

Cameron Inouye-Ng





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**A concerned parent**

1 message

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**Morningstar Peake** <morningstaronmaui@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:31 PM

To: "testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Dear Governor, it concerns me deeply to hear that there is consideration to cut our teachers pay starting January 2021. I feel that this is the wrong sector to give a pay cut if a pay cut is indeed necessary. Please do not put more stress on our teachers. My daughters are in 5th and 8th grade and I have witnessed how creative and flexible their teachers have been through this pandemic and things have not been easy beginning with the expectation to start face to face learning in August then a complete 180 degree change of plans to virtual learning with very little time to prepare and now getting the kids back into the classrooms and figure out how to do blended teaching, it's been so much on our teachers. They do not deserve a pay cut, they deserve a raise! I I Understand a raise is not an option but please do not cut their salary. Our teachers deserve better so that they can teach and lead our children, our future.

Sincerely, please reconsider.

Morningstar Mills Peake  
808.250.7844





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Education Furloughs**

1 message

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**Thomasina Simmons** <thomasinasimmons@rocketmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 10:48 PM

It is unnecessary to have teachers to take furlough days. Teacher always take the hit when it comes to these kinds of cuts.

It's time for others to step up their game. We have too many workers who DONT WORK. They don't hustle. It takes 4 guys to watch one guy fill a pothole. Seriously! I've seen this a number of times.

This state needs an overhaul. Too many people getting paid to do minimal work...and they get paid well! Waste! We are not being fiscally responsible and changing with the times.

We saw that 2020 allowed some state offices to work virtually and for things to get processed online. No need for all the extra building costs, parking/traffic problems, standing in lines. Time to move in the 21st Century and be more efficient.

Education... that has to change, too... but kids need to be in school. This is NOT GOOD for kids. They need good teachers. They need to enjoy learning. Some need to get away from their abusive homes.

Don't take from education.

Sent from my iPhone





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## We can't afford furloughs

1 message

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**Ms Jazz M** <msjasminemathew@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov  
Cc: Jasmine Mathew <Jasmine.Mathew@k12.hi.us>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 3:05 AM

My Dear Respective Board of Education,

Please find another way to fund state budget deficits.

I do not make enough money to survive here as the sole bread winner of my family of two.

This past year I've had to have a lumpectomy, radiation & hormone therapy. This is my ninth year with the Hawaii DOE. One year at Kihei charter school and eight years at kaiser High school.

I've dedicated my life to my work with my students and literally work around the clock to meet the needs of my students and their parents as a Science teacher ( Biology and Chemistry), Class of 2017 & Class of 2022 Advisor, Medical club, PAAC, Film club and Science bowl advisor.

Our students' education has been sacrificed already with covid 19 and we need to continue to keep up the momentum, time and support needed for our students to be competitive in the real world.

We have been approved for housing rental assistance and I've applied for help with our electric and medical bills.

Please try your best to not sacrifice the well being of myself and other hard working dedicated teachers in our kingdom. Please protect us. I cannot survive a pay cut in 2021.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Jasmine Mathew  
808-321-9914





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

**Betty** <bettyluvstrivia@yahoo.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 5:37 AM

Reply-To: Betty &lt;bettyluvstrivia@yahoo.com&gt;

To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" &lt;testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

Dear BOE,

My understanding is the Governor wants to use furlough days instead of a reduction in force. (I also understand he may also feel the budgetary need to hand out layoffs)

I am grateful to have a job even if I'm getting paid 9% to 10% less!

I'm grateful the schools will be closed on our furlough days because it is better than having to work every day AND getting paid less for it.

The alternatives to furlough days is not attractive.

I want to keep my job.

And I'd rather have the day off with the lower pay.

If the unions give the Governor a hard time he may reduce our pay AND make us work.

If the unions keep giving the Governor a hard time he may move straight to a reduction in force.

I hope the unions accept the furloughs and remind the grumblers they should be grateful they still have a job.

Mahalo for everything else you do for us.

Betty

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Perry Buchalter** <psbuchalter@gmail.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 6:01 AM

To whom this may concern,

During this pandemic, I should not have to tell you that one of the many shining lights, aside from the medical profession and first responders, has been teachers and the lengths we went to to make sure our students maintained the education they deserved.

Every parent all of a sudden recognizes teaching is no easy task as they have had to take on part of this role for their child to some degree, and have been singing their praises for what we do in our profession.

In these dire times, we are blessed to have our jobs and have taken on many new tasks including putting our lives on the line as students return to school and yet we are under attack once again as our Governor has targeted education for extreme budget cuts. The State of Hawaii is proposing cuts that would cut positions, electives, and enlarge class sizes at a time when we should be increasing opportunities for our students.

Those of us teachers in the State of Hawaii who had our step movements frozen after the market crash in 2008 were finally recognized as the "Compression Track" and a pay raise that would properly reflect our years in service was finally approved and was set to kick in just before the Pandemic hit. We no sooner got the well-deserved news when the raise in pay was immediately taken back, this was a huge pay-cut for us. Despite this tremendous set-back we continued to do our jobs, working more than ever to learn new strategies for distance learning and revamping graduation ceremonies last year to assure our students were recognized for their accomplishments.

Our politicians always speak on the importance of education during campaign speeches, but once in office immediately seem to forget this as we fight for a living wage. To this day, Teacher's salaries keep us in either the poverty or low-income levels for Hawaii's cost of living projections. This is a heartfelt plea from teachers who give heart and soul to our students who once again feel the dedication we give to our profession means very little to those in politics, who will always tout education in their campaign platforms then immediately turn their backs on us once in office.

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Perry S. Buchalter, NBCT  
BA, Fine Arts/CTE Department  
Molokai High School





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Furlough and layoffs**

1 message

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**ny\_costa24@yahoo.com** <ny\_costa24@yahoo.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 6:22 AM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

My name is Nyree Costa, Im A Educational Assistant at Keonepoko Elementary School, I had been at Keonepoko on the Big Island for 15 + years. I was informed 12/16/2020 that my Position has been cut for the 2021/2022 school year. I am a single person loving my job and this has come to me like a brick wall. This will impact my life financially. All these budget cuts and furloughs is not going to make things better for anyone. Our state students are already struggling, we have a high number of Sped. Students and you want to take more staff and days away from them is very upsetting and bothering and know as a poor Educational system! Please find a way to better this situation. Myself and many others are affected and hope for a better outcome. Our Economy will have a major affect from this. Myself and others are considering of moving states looking for employment if this happens and we don't have our positions next school year.

Thank you,  
Nyree Costa

\*Ny\*





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**(no subject)**

1 message

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**Cosme Amulacion** <cosme101@gmail.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 7:20 AM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

This furlough will affect our family come January 2021 both financially and mentally challenging,. we are a family of 3, surviving whatever income I bring home, to make matters worse, we're getting ready to move into our new home sometime mid January. Our monthly bills were calculated on a basis of what I bring home now, with the furlough and pay cut on it's way, I really need to think and pray on how to get by every month. I've been working from the beginning of this pandemic to feed our students.....this message is for the Governor, dear Governor, you really can't find another solution to balance the state's budget other than to put your state workers on furlough, make then take pay cuts for 4 years??? The last I check, your plan only penalize state workers, I suggest you should penalize everyone who lives in Hawaii, by raising the general excise tax, or legalize gambling so our residents don't have to go to Vegas, maybe even legalize medicinal marijuana, we got tons of Ag land available, or even legalize lottery here, I think that would pull the state out of this financial crisis, and that's all I have to say.





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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## Furloughs

1 message

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**Karol Wack** <alohilani39@aol.com>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 7:46 AM

Dear Distinguished Members of the BOE,

It is the end of the first semester and I was happy to receive my effective rating for EES, then the Governor announced the furloughs. I felt the opposite of appreciated, my rating was meaningless and a pit of anxiety formed in my stomach at the thought of how this cut will devastate so many, myself included.

We already have 1,000 vacant positions. Do the powers that be know the damage this cut will cause?! Teachers anywhere near retirement will leave, mainland teachers that came here to teach will leave because they will no longer be able to afford to stay and many others will leave as well to seek employment that will put food on their table and keep a roof over their head.

With this cut, I would make less than I was substitute teaching. I couldn't afford to support myself substituting, so I took a full time position last year. Don't get me wrong, I don't do it for the pay, none of us do. The long hours, the weekends. I love my students, I love my school. Everything I do, I do for my students. I give so much for them because that is what teachers do. But if we get these furloughs, I will have to leave the profession. I am single and support myself on a beginning teaching salary. The differentials that we began receiving in January made a huge positive difference in my life. I understand those may have to be taken away, but to cut a \$49k a year salary (before taxes) is saying that I mean nothing and that my students mean nothing.

Please stand with teachers, our keiki deserve better. There must be another solution. Please, I don't want to leave my students and see our education system devastated by a mass exodus of teachers. It will harm our students and further cripple the economy. Mahalo for the opportunity to share my thoughts and feelings.

Sincerely,

Karol Wack  
Special Education Teacher  
FSC/Resource K-2  
Honoka'a Elementary School  
Hawaii Island



Dear Board of Directors,

I usually don't send these kinds of testimony in for fear of retaliation by people who are above in the totem pole that is the DOE, nor have I ever felt my voice would ever be heard in recent events. One could say that I've been "beaten into complacency" by all the recent news, changes, and events that are out of my control during these trying times.

I still feel that my voice is meaningless to the higher ups in the BOE/DOE, but nevertheless, I am writing this to you. For what it's worth, I've been supportive of the governor for most of his term in office. I've trusted the Superintendent up until this past year. I've said time and time again, I don't want to be in any of your positions during this time of COVID. But, I've expected much more support from those who have been given the responsibility of representing us teachers at the highest levels of our state's government.

I am a citizen of Hawai'i. Struggling to make ends meet like many in my position. I am a bowling coach. I am a club advisor. I help out in the eSports community in Hawai'i. I am fortunate enough to have been able to afford a home of my own with my fiancé and her mother. Both of whom suffer from visible, physical disabilities, and invisible, mental disabilities.

But I am also a teacher. I instruct students who come from all sorts of backgrounds. I teach at a Title I school. I will assume you all know what that means. Everyday is a new experience with the students and faculty even before COVID-19 reared its ugly head.

Last year I was asked to give no work in Q4 and just "sustain learning." I did. Then, after a summer of silence, I was asked to do the impossible: go full virtual in less than two weeks. But I did. Then I was asked to navigate students through an impossible full distance learning environment, keep the rigor the same, while I learn on the fly how to do it all. But I feel like I did. I also made a ton of tutorials to help my fellow educators who were struggling with this impossible task thrown on our plates while I myself figured it all out.

Now we teachers are told that we're being furloughed and our pay reduced. It's already a struggle getting students to understand content and keep myself motivated to instruct them with the minimal "training" I received from the DOE in this time of COVID. It's already a struggle to continually think of new ways to motivate students in a 100% online environment. It's already a struggle not knowing what's going to happen in the future with the DOE/BOE seemingly not in support of us teachers.

Now you're asking me to do all of this with less pay and less time to prepare. No. Don't do this to us. You don't have to. HSTA President Corey Rosenlee outlines that there are many ways to not furlough us. I don't want to think about making a mortgage payment or feeding my family. I don't want to have to pick up another job. Teaching is already 24/7, 365. Yet we aren't paid nearly what I think the job demands of us. And now we're threatened with less.



I don't want to hear that I don't care for the kids. I do! They are the reason I took the profession! It's a cheap blow to every teacher to say we don't care about the kids. But if I can't care for myself first, HOW CAN I CARE FOR THE KIDS?! I have overcome impossible challenges this year that keep continuing to build atop one another.

I'm tired. We're all tired. If these furloughs and days cuts go through, we're going to be more tired. Our teacher force is already short. It's going to get shorter. "Someone will take up the burden" right? Statistics say, less and less likely. I will listen to the word of the law if they do go through. Directed leave means to me, no work. So I won't. And who will suffer? The kids. And then maybe...you'll blame me? I hope you can look in the mirror and see the impossibilities you've already put teachers through.

Like I said before, I don't feel my voice is heard. I doubt it will. That's how far my confidence has fallen for the BOE, DOE, and the State to fight for education. I want to believe in our government. I want to trust that the people who are paid to make huge decisions for education are making ones that support it, not make it worse. But...I doubt. And will continue to doubt until something happens otherwise.

Thank you for your time,

Kellen Inafuku  
Teacher  
Waipahu High  
808-227-4779





Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**Testimony**

1 message

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**Andrew Henderson** <andrew.henderson@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 8:01 AM

My wife and I are both teachers on the Big Island and have 7-year-old twin boys who aren't in school. The burden of worrying about child care is already great without factoring in pay cuts. The combined impact of these furlough days will be around \$1,000/month less income in our household not including child care expenses for 2 children! We already run a successful business on the side to make ends meet so I have no idea how single-income teachers will stay financially secure.

Another issue is that the governor obviously assumes that we will complete the work we should be doing on our planning and finishing days. It will just happen on our own time. Our good nature is being exploited.

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Testimony BOE &lt;testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov&gt;

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**TESTIMONY**

1 message

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**Melissa Hilson** <melissa.hilson@k12.hi.us>  
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 8:12 AM

~~~TESTIMONY~~~

Good morning Board of Education. How are you doing? Well, we teachers are NOT doing well! We are overworked and underpaid!!! YOU have the power to protect public education funding and support our fight against lge's furlough nonsense. Personally, cutting my salary would force me to get a second job or potentially return to the mainland as a teacher and earn a higher salary. Seven teachers have already left their teaching positions this first semester at the high school I am employed. EVERY single year (and I am a veteran teacher of 15 years here on Kauai) we lose teachers because of financial struggles.

When are you going to vote to pay us a livable wage? Teachers have worked twice as hard this past year and now we get a slap in the face pay cut?! What?! Meanwhile, my friends are enjoying luxurious lifestyles while on the beach collecting unemployment and stimulus checks. This makes NO sense! Why hurt those who are slaving away to produce productive members of society?

Please, I beg you to reconsider this decision to furlough us. I have so much more to say, but hey, I must get back to my JOB!

Mahalo.

Sincerely saddened 🙄 public school teacher,
Melissa Hilson

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Boreas v <boreasv@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 8:25 AM

Testimony

Teachers are already leaving. I am a teacher at Kauai High School and I urge you to avoid furloughs and pay cuts for teachers. At my school teachers have already left to take jobs in other states in anticipation of coming cuts.

It is impossible to attract and retain good teachers if they are not paid enough. Without enough good teachers, all efforts to improve public education in Hawaii are doomed. Teacher salaries were already too low before the current budget crisis. The proposed furloughs will have a long term effect on the quality of public education in Hawaii.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

How will furloughs effect me?

1 message

Desiree Soto <desireevsoto@yahoo.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 8:35 AM

Reply-To: Desiree Soto <desireevsoto@yahoo.com>

To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Aloha,

My name is Desiree Soto. I have been an educational assistant since 2002, permanent in 2006. I have been through the first round of furloughs that were put in place a few years back. It wasn't easy then, and It will be worse now.

Now, I am a mother of a special needs child who has just begun preschool. I have elderly parents at home who are slowly showing signs of slowing down physically. I have more at stake. More to worry about. More to lose. Every paycheck is counted down to the penny. I have always loved my job, but it is a struggle to get by just working the one job. So, I had to take on a second job. Now, with another round of furloughs...I may need a third job to make it, or may need to take on more and later hours at my second job. This means more time taken from my child, my first and only child, and less help for my parents in the home.

I work hard. I love what I do. I go above and beyond for my students and teachers... But it is things like this that make me question how much we are appreciated. Will I leave? After this, for the first time ever...im considering it.

Thank for your time,
Desiree Soto

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

BOE Furlough Testimony1 message

Karen Kama <dakamas@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 8:37 AM

Dear Board Members,

I'm here as a member of the Related Services team. We SLPs, OTs and PTs provide much needed and often requested therapy for special education children, but we have never been "essential." We've requested increases in salary or reimbursement of certification fees to match our mainland counterparts, but the DOE declined. There has been such a severe shortage of providers that we often cover multiple schools providing not just therapy, but evaluations, consultations, all while doing our best to connect with students, families and team members, but we've never been "essential." In fact even though our staffing shortage has been more dismal than our special education teacher counterparts, the DOE said they weren't interested in offering the same incentives for retaining and recruiting Related Service Providers. We have been forced to acquire Medicaid NPI numbers and are the only employees that can actually make money for the DOE, but we weren't "essential" enough for clear guidance and rules to protect our licenses and maintain our workload. However, now that COVID has come, we magically became "essential." We were tossed a few PPE items, a pat on the back and sent to be face to face with children, while also providing synchronous webex sessions for distance learners with only a PowerPoint presentation for training. Apparently we're "essential" enough to meet IEP minutes and keep due process cases from occurring, but we need to jump through hoops to telework, protect ourselves and face increased workloads. After almost 15 years of not being valued or appreciated, we stand facing furloughs imposed that break our contract and are again "non-essential" when it's convenient for the DOE. Myself and many of my counterparts are planning on leaving the DOE if the furloughs come to pass, its more than we can bare. The shortage of Related Service Providers will worsen and it will impact Hawaii's most vulnerable keiki. Board, please advocate to prevent these furloughs because all DOE service providers, teachers, and students are essential.

Karen Kama, MS, CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist, DOE



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony DOE Furloughs

1 message

merri Wada Tanji <merriwada@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 10:04 AM

Board of Education Members,

The first point I think the Board needs to be aware of is the already articulated budget cut to the Weighted Student Formula (WSF) funds. These funds are used at the school level to fund teacher positions and student programs. The 10% cut in WSF funds means that teacher positions will be lost and programs that support student learning will need to be cut. In other words less teachers and less student programs. I'm not sure how it was rationalized that cutting at the school level was a good idea but IF the DOE and Board of Education is throwing out such things as **being student** center and preserving instructional minutes then you have missed the mark substantially. Having students sit in a room for more time without the teachers or programs available is pointless.

Now on top of this 10% cut in WSF funds, the Governor is mandating furloughs. So whatever teachers are left will have to do their current job plus the job of those teachers that have been cut with less time and less pay. I cannot fathom how this will affect our students but the message is loud and clear that they are NOT the priority.

I have been teaching for 15 years and have seen the adverse effects of the 1st furloughs and the real value that the state puts on education and their teachers. I have seen the verbal abuse that teachers endure from lawmakers when we ask to be compensated for the work we are already doing. I have seen many of my fellow teachers (great educators) defeated and broken leave the profession because of this impossible fight. I know fellow educators who are considering quitting and retiring early because of the lack of value that the state has put on education.

At our school it has already been stated that we will be losing approximately 4 positions. These teachers will most likely be teachers of the Arts. Programs will be lost, such as the makerspace and robotics, Music, Technology, PE. As the many industries move into a global market, how are we preparing our students to be able to compete with the rest of the nation and world. Will our student be prepared to work in a global market that requires innovation, creativity, resilience, and intellect? How do we build a strong nation if we remove such curriculum as history and social sciences? How do we instill character and integrity when having to eliminate humanities.

The decisions that are made right now to balance a budget will have compounding and lasting effects on the future of Hawai'i and the ability for our residents to build a competitive workforce. I urge you to consider not just what is obvious but the ripple effect of these decisions that are being made.

Mahalo,

Merri Wada Tanji



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Jill Yamasawa Fletcher <jyamasawa@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 10:44 AM

Dear BOE,

Furloughs would make continuing being a teacher very difficult for many teachers and families. I've been a public school teacher since 2008 and I was around for the first furloughs Fridays as it was my first two years as a teacher. Furloughs are not only taking away pay from teachers, but also learning for students. I sincerely hope that you do not approve these furloughs.

Sincerely,

Jill Fletcher



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

1 message

mtsukayama@hawaii.rr.com <mtsukayama@hawaii.rr.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 10:47 AM

To: "testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

I am submitting testimony for item VB: Presentation on questions regarding Department of Education furloughs, including furlough schedule, impact on school planning and services, communications with families and employees. Thank you once again for taking our testimony against furlough days for teachers, school employees and for our students.

We, my husband and I, are a two-teacher family. We have worked for the DOE for over 20 years each. Both of us will get pay cuts if furloughs are put in place. Our household income will be reduced by almost 10%. When you live on teachers' salaries that are not huge to begin with, a 10% reduction is a lot. Additionally, our own children will lose out on instructional days. Being in the education system we know that reducing planning days will affect the quality of instruction as well.

We have an 11th grader who is considering mainland colleges and another in 7th grade. We have a mortgage – in Hawaii. And monthly bills. We have been truly grateful that we have our jobs, are healthy, and aside from the social restrictions and changes to daily life, have been spared from the major effects of COVID thus far. Knock on wood. Because of this we have talked to our boys about being thoughtful and generous to others when we can. With pay cuts, we are concerned for our future and the future education of our boys, among other things. Teachers are mostly responsible and prepared people by nature. We live and plan accordingly and make decisions considering our salaries that should only increase over time, not decrease.

Teachers have jumped through hoops during the COVID-19 changes to education, and in fact always. We have teachers in their 70's who had difficulty with email now teaching classes online daily. We have new teachers who had visions of their first classes filled with students who are now experiencing something they were never taught or prepared for. We have teachers "in the middle" who have been working hard to "climb the ladder" who have worked through a strike, furloughs, and years of contracts with little to no raises. Last year, we were so excited to be in the process of that being remedied only to have it smothered by the COVID virus. We did not argue or grumble and understood that it had to be that way for now. We received the last of our pay raises for the contract period this past October only to see it taken away and then some with pending furloughs. Now we are in contract negotiations during a time when the state has to make up billions of dollars.. The outlook is bleak. And yet teachers march on. But please do know that this has all taken its toll. Teachers are head noddors and often do more and more at their own expense. I believe that teachers will not just nod their heads to pay cuts after doing so much for the school system. They will shake their heads NO. Teachers are often taken advantage of because our employer knows that when teachers are with their students, they cannot remain angry or take it out on the children they have dedicated their lives to supporting. The state has called us essential workers when it has been convenient but not when it comes to compensating teachers for the hard work they do. It is extremely frustrating to be notified of the 6-10 furlough dates especially when there still seems to be other options to consider.

While I know there are many worse off and that we all need to be a part of the solution, I do not believe furloughing teachers is the right thing to do. I have written about the effects on teachers but what about our students? How can we make statements about students losing out on instruction and not meeting standards, and at the same time lessen their already reduced number of school days? And taking away planning days from teachers is a gut punch. Teachers need to plan and prepare for students. Many schools are changing their learning models or having students move between models for the new semester. Not being given time to prepare will affect instruction and student learning also. Or, are teachers expected to do this planning during their Winter Break knowing their pay will be cut? Teachers already put in so much extra time. They deserve two full weeks of rest and relaxation after all they have done, not a pay cut and work during their time off.

We know most of you agree and have advocated for teachers this entire time. Thank you. We ask that you continue to support teachers and consider us important and necessary enough to remove the furloughs and treat us with the respect we all deserve. Thank you for your time. I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Grab and Go Meals Program

1 message

Amanda Langston <Amanda.Langston@kamalaniacademy.org>
To: "Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov" <Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 11:02 AM

Aloha e Hawaii Board of Education,

I am the Po'o Kula of Kamalani academy and I am testifying today regarding the Grab and Go Meals Program. Our Charter School receives lunches from a Grab and Go Meal site. At the beginning of this school year when we found out this program was extended until the end of this school year I contacted the DOE's Hawaii Food service to inquire if this service would be provided to the students who are attending our school. We were told that this program was not extended to charter schools. This does not make sense as Hawaii DOE is being given federal dollars to provide food for all children from ages 1-18. We pick up lunches each day from this site and are charged \$6 per plate. The meals that the site is providing is the same meal that is being provided to the public and students attending school at that site for free. The meals our students are getting are far less substantial. We offered several ways to abide by rules and guidelines so that our families whom are also struggling are able to benefit from these federal dollars but continually are told this does not extend to charter schools. Then we were told because we had a vended meals contract we could not participate. We did not have an executed vended meals contract as it was never signed. There is email documentation that the Hawaii Food Service agreed there was no signed contract in August. Once the Hawaii Child Nutrition Program started to question the Hawaii Food Service about this then all of a sudden a contract was signed but still never sent to the school. This contract was backdated and signed before August. This program that the federal government provided for all children in the United States should be extended for all children. It should not matter where students are coming from or what schools they attend. If we are all here for the Keiki then this grab and go meals program should be provided to all students Hawaii DOE or Charter.



Amanda Fung (Langston)

Po'o Kula (Principal)

Kamalani Academy

[1403 California Ave.](#)

[Wahiawa HI. 96797](#)

(808) 203-2993

"Never cease to act because you fear you may fail" ~ Queen Liliuokalani



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Christopher Dewhirst <christopher.dewhirst@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 11:09 AM

Dear BOE

I am a special education teacher who has been teaching for 10 years within the Hawaii DOE. I am writing to you today to inform you of how my life will change due to furloughs and pay cuts within the DOE that have been proposed. I have worked extremely hard to reach the pay scale I am at. I am grateful that the pay scale steps are not frozen like they once were. However, even at the pay scale I am at, and with the \$10,000 extra a year awarded to special education teachers, I struggle with my monthly rent and being able to afford basic needs. I cannot create adequate savings for emergencies.

When I was 25 and single I could deal with being a poor educator. I could deal with not being able to have a reliable car, or hitchhike when I had a car repair, because it would take 2 months to save up making next to nothing. At 38 I am in a slightly better place, but not by much. I am now a father who makes slightly more, but the cost of living has increased dramatically on Maui. Especially rent. I currently live in a rental where my daughter sleeps on the couch and the shower each morning is filled with termite dust and bugs. I am able to afford this rental because the landlords do not ask the going price due to the condition of the rental. They know it is decrepit but I still pay a little over half of my monthly income towards it. I look online at rentals hoping I may find a 2 bedroom or even a nicer one bedroom so that my daughter doesn't have to sleep on the couch and can have her own space to do her school work. The cheapest 2 bdrm rental is more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of what I make. A nicer 1 bedroom is just under $\frac{3}{4}$ of what I make.

Taking away any amount of pay from me puts my ability to provide for myself and my daughter at risk. I am fortunate. My daughter still doesn't have her own bedroom but she at least has a couch to sleep on. If these cuts and furloughs go through my daughter will be sleeping on the back seat of my truck parked by the beach. Please understand that many of us are struggling with living situations, even with the current pay. Cutting our pay puts more teachers at risk of homelessness and turnover.

One last thing that I would like you to reflect on is how the quality of living for the family of an educator is worse than the quality of living for a family receiving assistance/ benefits. Why would I continue to teach and risk being homeless when I could be unemployed or work a lower wage job in order to receive HUD and provide my daughter her own bedroom?

Please respect education and learning. Show the community that teachers and education are valued by standing up for us and not taking away money we so desperately need just to get by. One of the saddest things I have ever experienced is telling my daughter not to become a teacher because I don't want her to end up struggling financially like myself.

Sincerely,
Christopher Dewhirst
Kalama Intermediate, Maui
(808) 936-3838

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Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

please do not furlough us

1 message

Ocean Breezes <oceanbreezes77@gmail.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 11:33 AM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Besides furloughs further reducing student contact time, I also am worried financially since I also help support my special needs brother.

Please do not furlough us.

Thank you.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

testimony

1 message

Dana Wetmore <danawetmorespeechpath@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 11:47 AM

I'm writing as a previous member of the DOE Related Services team, as a fellow SLP to those still working at the DOE and on behalf of the special education students that benefit from related service providers.

While I was working for the schools, we (SLPs, OTs, PTs) requested increases in salary or reimbursement of certification fees to match our mainland counterparts; however the DOE declined. There has been such a severe shortage of providers that SLPs cover multiple schools providing not just therapy, but evaluations, consultations, all while doing their best to connect with students, families and team members, but they've never been "essential." In fact even though the staffing shortage has been more dismal than the special education teacher counterparts, the DOE said they weren't interested in offering the same incentives for retaining and recruiting Related Service Providers.

Related service providers have been forced to acquire Medicaid NPI numbers and are the only employees that can actually make money for the DOE, but weren't "essential" enough for clear guidance and rules to protect their licenses and maintain their workload. However, now that COVID has come, they magically became "essential." Related Service Providers were tossed a few PPE items, a pat on the back and sent to be face to face with children, while also providing synchronous webex sessions for distance learners with only a PowerPoint presentation for training. Apparently they're "essential" enough to meet IEP minutes and keep due process cases from occurring, but they need to jump through hoops to telework, protect themselves and face increased workloads.

I left my position as a DOE speech language pathologist in October 2020 because of the specific reasons listed above and the associated negative consequences that impacted my mental well-being, my effectiveness as a therapist, and the impacts it had on my students. I was servicing up to 80 students in multiple schools because there was no other SLP available in the district - that comes out to over 30 hours of services a week. I had to participate in IEP meetings lasting up to 6 hours during the school day to work with contentious parents on collaborating and creating IEPs. In order to catch up with immense workload, I was frequently working up to 10 hour work days. And above all, the demand impacted my ability to plan for my students, provide accurate service minutes, and meet the diverse needs of my students.

I know for a fact that other related service providers are feeling the same negative impacts that lead to my resignation. The shortage of Related Service Providers will worsen and it will impact Hawaii's most vulnerable keiki. Board, please advocate to prevent these furloughs because all DOE service providers, teachers, and students are essential.

Thank you,
Dana Wetmore

Dear Chair Payne and Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Jodi Kunimitsu and I am a math teacher at Maui High School. I am writing in strong opposition to the recently announced furlough plan for DOE employees. My husband and I are both DOE teachers. This is the second time in a little over 10 years that we are both being furloughed by the state. For me, this is not only about money. This is about respect for our profession and for the people you always expect to "save the children".

The public education system in Hawaii is dying a slow and painful death. You expect the system to survive off of teachers "goodwill" and "big hearts". You know very well that our students would not be doing as well as they are, if not for teachers putting in way more time past their contract hours and putting up their own money to supply their classrooms. Yet, there is NEVER any acknowledgement of that by the people sitting at the very top of the DOE. Instead, we are ALWAYS called upon to sacrifice "for the kids". Let's be real - the people doing the most "for the kids" are the school level employees. And here we are, once again, being asked to sacrifice - in the middle of an unprecedented school year - one in which we have sacrificed more than ever before to make distance and hybrid learning work for our students. No one has acknowledged the amount of time and energy teachers have put forth to make this year work for our students. No one has acknowledged the stress and mental toll this has taken on teachers. We are expected to just "keep on keeping on...for the kids". If there has been any acknowledgement of these things, it has been overshadowed by all the slaps in the face by the DOE - us having to fight for safe working conditions, fight for telework, fight for resources - all we have been doing this school year is fighting with the DOE to get some respect and safe working conditions. Imagine that - the most valuable and necessary employees in the school having to fight with their employer about basic working conditions - and now being slapped in the face AGAIN with furloughs.

You see, the problem here is that you think every employee will just suck it up and stay in the DOE "for the kids"....and the ones that choose to go? Well, we'll survive without them, right? WRONG!!! There are lots of highly qualified teachers leaving, because they are either tired of being treated like this and have better opportunities or they just can't afford to stay here in Hawaii. Do you see a long line of applicants waiting to take their place? I don't. We've had a teacher shortage for far too long and haven't been able to recover. Do you see what I mean about public education dying a slow and painful death?

When are we going to stop making excuses for having to starve our already dying public education system and do something about it? The public education system is on a ventilator and we, the employees are the exhausted, overworked medical staff trying desperately to keep it alive. Please stop killing it with furloughs and budget cuts!!!!

Sincerely,

Jodi Kunimitsu
Kihei, Maui



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Support related service providers, Stop Furloughs

1 message

Tricia Kagimoto <kagibuya@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 12:08 PM

Dear Board Members,

I am a Related Service Provider for students with special needs under the federal IDEA act. We are mandated to service students based on the student's Individualized Education Plan according to each student's need. This includes OT, PT and Speech services. With the upcoming order to furlough us and reduce the instructional days and planning days, you are only causing harm to the state's public education system. We hope the BOE will support us in stopping the furloughs.

Related service providers provide direct services and assessments to the special needs population, and consultation to staff. We are also required to document every minute that the student is serviced. The furlough days will cause a negative impact on the providers as it decreases the days we are able to service the students as well as eliminates the time needed to complete required documentation. It is already difficult to recruit and retain providers and this causes existing providers to be overworked. More providers will leave and less will apply causing more of a strain on your related service providers. We do not have the liberty of getting substitutes and when we take leave due to illness or vacation we must return only to have the burden of making up all the missed services during our time off. The furloughs will cause the same hardship of forcing us to continue to see the same caseload with less work days. That is not fair. Teachers do not have to make up their missed instructional days but related service providers are required to. Related service providers are Medicaid providers that allow the DOE to receive funds based on our services to the students. Can't the DOE use these funds to help supplement us instead of furloughing us?

During the pandemic, it was forced upon us to figure out how to service the students in a variety of ways including virtually and in-person. We have been forced to manage multiple schools differing schedules while ensuring all students are provided the needed services. There has been an increase in meetings and paperwork as a result of Covid-19. We are all barely surviving to get the students seen and work done. We were hoping relief was coming soon instead we got the news that our pay will be cut and more work will be put on us. With the news that furloughs will start on January 1, it is disheartening to think that the state does not care about the children who are the future of our state. Nor do they care about the ones providing services to educate these children.

During the start of Covid-19, employees of DOE were considered essential. When stay at home orders were made, educating our Keiki continued. Related services have been providing in-person services and are on the "front lines" being potentially exposed to your highly vulnerable students. We have worked tirelessly to do our job. Maybe the State of Hawaii should do the same and figure out a way to manage their budget to support your providers who have been working day in and out to educate and provide services to the students of Hawaii. BOE please support your educators including related service providers to stop the furloughs and show your support to all of us who have done all we can to ensure your students are being serviced.

Sincerely,
Tricia Shibuya-Kagimoto



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony in Support of Sunny Unga's Petition for Rule Change2 messages

Jessica dos Santos <nrtshrlv@gmail.com>

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 5:44 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Cc: Sunny Unga <sunnyrkim@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jessica dos Santos and I strongly support Sunny Unga's Petition for Rule Change No. 20-01.

I am a lifelong resident of Kahuku, a Hawai'i educator of 14 years, and, most importantly, a parent. I am very concerned about the proximity of the NPM turbines to our schools and community and the lack of consensus and conclusiveness in the research surrounding the possible detrimental health effects industrial turbines could have on people, especially children, and other high-risk populations. If we do not know for sure that industrial turbines do not cause harm to our keiki and kupuna, it is unjust to relegate us to bear this type of burden, being guinea pigs of a potentially dangerous health experiment, without our consent. There are many community members that have been questioning whether or not their health conditions, migraines, severe autism meltdowns, epileptic seizures, tinnitus - a persistent ringing in the ear which causes sleep deprivation and stress -, nausea and dizziness, cardiovascular disease, sleep disturbance, are being caused by low-frequency sound waves and sound from the current Kahuku Wind Farm. During our fight, I worked with a team researching, for months, all of the reliable sources we could find. There has never been a study completed on any community that is this close, to this large of a turbine. My son would be 26 years old by the time the NPM turbines face decommissioning and he would have spent a majority of his youth being exposed to these potentially degrading health effects in the most vulnerable of his educational years.

It was disheartening that the BOE submitted an official comment without having heard our concerns or being sure of the potential unsafe learning and working environment the turbines would create. If the DOE has a duty to ensure that the students and faculty have a safe learning environment, it seems only right that more time would be taken to truly consult with the community and conduct more in-depth research into the impacts before making any comment. Had the BOE raised concerns over the proximity of the turbines to the school, it may have influenced the state to require a larger setback. I urge the leaders of the BOE and the DOE to take a drive out to Kahuku and spend time at Kahuku Elementary School or Kahuku District Park where our children play to hear the constant swoosh of the turbines and see their colossal presence hovering over the schools. Then perhaps you would realize our additional anger at the fact that no emergency plan is in place, or being addressed to our knowledge, should there be tower collapse, blade throw, or fire at NPM.

When sending our students to DOE schools, parents want to have trust that the school system is doing everything possible to keep our children safe, therefore it is paramount that there be more transparency and trust-building with the community when it comes to large scale developments near schools and libraries. This rule change is a necessary step towards a better, and more just, relationship with the BOE and community.

Respectfully,
Jessica dos Santos
nrtshrlv@gmail.com
808381-4069

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Jessica A. dos Santos
Phone: (808) 381-4069

Jessica dos Santos <nrtshrlv@gmail.com>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 12:26 PM

Hello,

I am deeply concerned about the way in which the so called "public meeting" denied the public the ability to sign up, up to 15 minutes before the meeting as it was stated on the website. Also, the confusion with not letting people know exactly when the executive session would conclude and when testimony would resume. I was in the restroom when you called my name and I then entered back right away, but then I was also denied my right to testify. The BOE needs to give the public a true opportunity to testify.

[Quoted text hidden]



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

How furloughs will affect me!

1 message

Michelle Pila <mtus@hawaii.edu>
To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 1:04 PM

Aloha BOE board members,

As a DOE employee I barely make enough as it is to get by, now the proposed furlough is set to take effect beginning January 4, 2021 and continue for the next four (4) years. I will be applying for state benefits such as SNAP and financial assistance from the state because I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PAY MY BILLS, for groceries, doctor visits, gas, and rent. Is the Governor taking a furloughed pay cut as well As other members of his cabinet?? I think not. How about Board members? Elected officials? Who else is taking a pay cut besides the DOE workers?? I would really like to know how taking from the people like me who makes the least amount of money helps our state. Why are we being penalized for the shortfall during the pandemic?? Why wasn't more covid funds used? Why were they hoarding it? Claims of missing unemployment monies in the hundred thousands go missing, highly unlikely. The people of Hawai'i is being robbed by people who want to be elected then don't work for the good of all the people, all constituents, not just the wealthy!! I am beyond pissed that I will be furloughed when I was asked to show up for work to provide direct services to students in less than 6 feet away, no social distancing, I did even though I was scared. I will be another person on the verge of homelessness. This is sad. Already having lost one income in my household, to lose even more when it's already a struggle is more than unfair. My household will be directly affected with more loss of income and I don't receive any assistance in any form from anyone. I am highly considering another job, field, and or even relocating. Feeling like having to do this because this will devastate my family's lives, many people, it will devastate communities, It will have more parents away from their children just to put food on the table. Do you currently have trouble paying bills and or putting food on the table?? There should be some sort of a criteria for something like this instead of across the board because the people on the bottom end of pay range will be in more debt and have a bigger burden than you could ever imagine. (That's me!). There needs to be a better solution, you were elected to sit on this board to be an asset to the people of Hawai'i! The Representatives that we're also elected, I feel has the same duty to the people of Hawai'i. In addition to many financial burdens this will bring, it will take more time away from students. It will impact them and their households as well. More time loss to make up a budget that no one had any control over except the people sitting in office. What the hell! Find solutions, legalize [REDACTED] there are other ways, raise hotel tax, legalize marijuana and tax it like in Denver, Colorado. It is a major source of their economy.. I just can't believe that this is the best our leaders can do. Which all you sitting on a board should be deeply ashamed and at this point aren't leaders. This is sent from a very frustrated and broke person who shows up to do her job daily!



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

NO PERSONAL INFORMATION Testimony 12/17/2020 Full Board Meeting Discussion Item B, Action Item B

1 message

[REDACTED]
to: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 1:29 PM

NO PERSONAL INFORMATION
Testimony
12/17/2020
Full Board Meeting
Discussion Item B, Action Item B

Aloha Board,

Please redact my identifying information, including my email address. I realize this is late, but I have again agonized over whether to submit testimony due to concerns about retaliation. I hope you will still consider my input.

I am submitting testimony related to Discussion Item B and Action Item B. I am an educational officer who is not in a school, i.e. complex area/state office. My spouse is an educational assistant who works with medically fragile children in a public elementary school.

There is no easy way to address the dire economic situation the state is in at the moment. There are realities that can't be sugar coated or ignored. This is a topic that requires careful consideration and there are no signs that such consideration has been paid by the Governor or the Superintendent. I'd ask you to consider the following:

Whose interests are being served? We have been told constantly throughout this pandemic that the reopening of the economy is dependent on educators, that we have obligations to provide academic and wraparound services, that teaching and learning of social studies and science are more important than ever for our society to function. And yet, predictably, the balancing of the economy falls on the backs of schools. Teachers, aides, trainers, administrators, custodians, cafeteria staff, librarians, counselors, and many others are being asked to make do with less both professionally and personally. Does this serve our children, our 'ohanas, our future?

Have all other options been examined and exhausted? It seems as though this has not happened. There are state employees who are not being asked to face furloughs. I have seen that those of us who could be considered middle-class have been left to squabble and in-fight over how a ~10% pay cut may impact our ability to survive depending on where we live, if we are in a dual- or single-income household, etc. In the meantime, we have HIDOE employees whose **regular salaries** would put them below the poverty line if they have a single income. Note, however, that even the highest paid HIDOE employees make a fraction of what other high-paid state employees make. There is no simple solution, but surely there are ways to approach furloughs and cuts in ways that are more equitable, yet perhaps not equal across the board, and in ways that do not plunge our middle- and low-income families into debt and despair. Further, there may be ways to cut expenditures that are not salaries. I know salaries make up a huge proportion of our expenses, but deeper cuts made carefully with a scalpel might allow for more shallow cuts elsewhere.

What is the role of leadership at this time? Dr. Kishimoto has consistently advocated that she should be evaluated gently in the context of a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. Surely we are all doing our best at this time. However, those of us in the field are expected to deliver at a high level, when circumstances have made our own jobs difficult and literally put our lives in danger, all for proportionally lower salaries with potential pay decreases that will impact our lives and livelihoods in real ways. Additionally, Dr. Kishimoto continues to misstep, telling [untruths about the furlough situation](#), cheerfully touting state accomplishments in what appeared to be a [self-promotional video](#) that could serve as evidence for her own evaluation, never acknowledging or apologizing for the disaster that has been Acellus, and engaging employees in a glib holiday toast. Only someone who has not ever been a K-12 teacher would imply that taking away teacher work and professional learning days lessens the impact on students. Dr. Kishimoto is not a middle-manager who needs to

cheerlead her staff in the face of ongoing and imminent crises to keep up morale; she is the top-level leader who is actively deciding to endanger the lives and futures of so many of her employees and those we serve.

I will end with the personal impact by saying this. My family is stuck. We will be impacted because we have no other choice than to be taken advantage of, and I think the Governor and Superintendent are well aware that this is the situation for so many. There is nowhere else professionally for me to go in Hawaii based on my specialized training and skills and the lack of other potential jobs being posted because of the state of the economy. My spouse perhaps could go back to working retail part-time, but retail hours are scaled back and first priority is rightfully given to those who work retail full time. We would have difficulty moving out of state because of our family and support network here. So as we prepare to take on the expense of preschool for our young child, at the same time as having both our salaries cut, we will just suck it up, because we have to.

Education is a caring profession and educators are often taken advantage of because of this. Please know that this is not just a cut to our salaries, but a deep wound to the profession and to our collective futures.

Mahalo,

HIDOE Educational Officer



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Sanoe Kalahiki <skalahiki01@gmail.com>

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 2:24 PM

To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Aloha,

Mu name is Sanoe Kalahiki and I am a special education teacher at Castle High School. I feel that teachers need to be treated more like essential workers (especially SPED teachers). Parents need their children in school. I am father of 5 and trying to work and have kids at home doing school work while I'm on my campus is very difficult. Beyond the personal financial repercussions, these furloughs will not only increase the amount of instruction time lost for our students but the time that we have as SPED teachers to complete our work and meet our FEDERALLY MANDATED deadlines will also be decreased. The federal government will not adjust because of our states lack of vision. As teachers we are already under paid these furloughs will not help the situation. High teacher turnover will continue be a problem. This can lead to lack of rapport built between student and teacher, which can directly affect student progress and success.

mahalo,

Sanoe Kalahiki



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Sienna Makarewicz <ohanamaka@gmail.com>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 7:48 PM

I am so tired of this 🙄

Sent from my iPad



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony furloughs

1 message

Samuel Kelley <samuel.kelley@k12.hi.us>
To: testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

Fri, Dec 18, 2020 at 11:10 AM

One of the essential questions I always ask my students is "Why do we have a government in the first place?" What is the purpose of society? If it is not to have a system to help put out the fire when your house burns down, a teacher who will help a student to live up to their full potential, or to help those who have been cast aside by our ruthless economic games, and to provide safety and security for the people; what other possible purpose could it serve? In this definition of government, the politicians are expendable. They organize and manage, but the real service is the people in the community who get their hands dirty, and often sacrifice their own interests for the good of their community. The politician's service to our society, while important and difficult, does not hold up to the need for firefighters and teachers. Some might say that without the funds from the government, we wouldn't have these services. I would point to the history that speaks otherwise. I would point to the self-sacrificing people who, right now, are ready to do what is necessary because it is simply necessary. I ask you, if your job announced a 10% cut to your pay, what would you do? Would you continue to work just as hard as before? Would you go along as if nothing has happened?

Recently, House Speaker Scott Saiki, speaking about the legalization of cannabis as a way to combat the budget shortfall, said "It's important that we not react and look at quick fixes. Quick fixes usually don't work out for our state." It boggles the mind to understand how cutting the pay of your public workers could be a less extreme fix than legalization. Isn't this the purpose of the government? Shouldn't we literally try to do everything else possible before we start cutting the services to the people? Surely the rail project couldn't be more important than that? Did Ige really do everything else possible before enacting these furloughs?

My wife and I are both teachers, I will not be ashamed of my own biases. With Covid, we both feel how ineffective we are for our students, and it hurts us. In general, educators just want to help the next generation, and we want to rise to the challenge of distance learning. But now, with both of us taking pay cuts, we will probably have to find employment elsewhere. I have a masters degree in teaching. My wife has a physics degree. Who will take our place? Who will be willing to accept such a low wage for the job, when it was already the lowest in the nation (when looking at cost of living)? Someone who does not have the best interests of the student in mind. Someone who won't work extra hours outside of school to make your student succeed.

Cutting pay and cutting services is not how you stimulate an economy. 70% of the nation's economy is consumer spending, and that is much higher in Hawaii. How can cutting the pay of more workers help? That will mean less people to spend money. And who will it hurt? The workers and their families who send their kids to public schools. Rest assured, wealthy parents who send their kids to expensive, private schools will be unaffected. The divide between the rich and poor is widening and making opportunities dependent on wealth. Public facilities are getting hit the hardest. Your children, though, are the ones who will suffer. They are the ones who will have less opportunity to succeed. When we lower the bar for teachers, we make it harder for the teachers who truly care to succeed. Remember, these budget cuts send a message, not that teachers don't matter, but that your children don't.

Before the pandemic, teachers in Hawaii were some of the lowest paid in the entire country. Many teachers already held multiple jobs to make up for the lost income. Again, we worked multiple jobs just to make the standard of living. Many workers have to do this, especially in Hawaii, but teachers are supposed to be working on helping the next generation succeed. Many of us also lost those second jobs when the islands shut down, and couldn't get unemployment since we still made "enough money". With Covid, many teachers saw their workload DOUBLE, as we taught both online and in-person classes. I won't even discuss the risks that many teachers took, as many are of an "at-risk" age. But do it they did, because what most teachers care about more than anything is helping children. One thing they hate though, is people who take advantage of that kindness. And now they are saying that we will be taking a 10% pay cut. I understand that

the government is short on funds, but perhaps they should have "saved for a rainy day" like they are telling renters across the state. Or they should have invested in an economy not solely based on tourism. The worst part about this is it looks like the government didn't even consider other options before making cuts to education, it was simply the easiest thing for them to do.

Mark Zuckerberg, a recent addition to the island of Kauai, has more money than the entire GDP of the state of Hawaii. By at least 20 billion dollars. There are millionaires on every island, many who now work remotely in California (so they aren't paying income tax here). We have one of the highest populations of millionaires in the entire country. There are thousands of rental properties across the state sitting empty while the people deemed essential suffer and lose their homes. Are we working and suffering just to make the rich people richer? Why is it the workers who always have to sacrifice? I ask again, for what purpose do we have a government? Is it to organize, protect, and help the people? Or is it to funnel money to the top? And depending on the answer, we should start asking ourselves, "why is it still here?"

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Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

This is a staff email account managed by Hawaii Department Of Education School District. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

furlough

1 message

gush <gush@hawaii.rr.com>

Fri, Dec 18, 2020 at 2:31 PM

To: Testimony.BOE@boe.hawaii.gov

I work as a educational assistant and as some people know we are on the lower end of the pay scale. The first round of furloughs lasted only 2 years and it hurt as Hawaii is an high cost of living state. Now with this round of furloughs projected to last 4 years and the cost of living not any lower it will hurt much more. I understand that the State has no money and everyone must do their share to help but not everyone will be helping to my understanding. We were told to come to work since we were essential while other people were working from home during pandemic. It is hard to live from paycheck to paycheck but with these furloughs it will be even harder to go out and help the economy.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone



Testimony BOE <testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov>

Testimony

1 message

Tia McLean <mcleantia36@gmail.com>

Sat, Dec 19, 2020 at 9:33 PM

To: Testimony.boe@boe.hawaii.gov

Hawaii requires reparations. You visit her, take from her, leave your garbage, your carbon footprint and your racism. And she keeps giving, asking nothing in return. And that needs to stop, immediately!

Furloughs to public education in Hawaii are a violent act of systemic racism. There are racial disparities, marginalization and an ever increasing achievement gap that you contribute to by visiting Hawai'i, and capitalizing on Hawai'i's brand. Your vacation home drives up the cost of real estate so local people are forced to work three jobs and live in multi-generational homes to make ends meet.

Their hard working keiki are thrown into a system of public education that diminishes their capacity by design. Their teachers are underpaid, under appreciated and understand that their jobs are always on the line.

Capitalism has always bred racism and Hawai'i is a casualty of war. In the quest for white supremacy, colonialism has ensured that students of color, local keiki, will continue to be underserved, defunded and marginalized because our state, and the people who visit our state and capitalize on our state are more concerned with the perpetuation of vacation than honoring the land and the people of the land who have and continue to live in right relations with the 'aina.

If you visit Hawai'i, care about Hawai'i, profit from the exploitation and capitalization of Hawai'i you need to invest in reparations so local students have the opportunity and access to excel and succeed.

Tia McLean

Southern Oregon Teacher of the Year 2020

Wailuku Elementary, Iao School, Baldwin High School Alumni