

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Alexandra Oبرا

Organization

Hawai'i Department of Education - Waiāhole Elementary School

Position/Title

Principal

Agenda Item

III. Committee on Weights XIV update regarding weighted student formula for 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school years

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

September 15, 2025

Dear Board of Education Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

I strongly urge you to approve the Committee on Weights (COW) recommendations for SY 2026–2027 and SY 2027–2028, particularly Recommendation #2: funding for rural and remote schools.

For small schools like mine, this funding is critical. It has allowed me to:

- Hire a full-time counselor (previously we had one staff member who served as both the counselor and student services coordinator).
- Share a 12-month student services coordinator with Ka'a'awa Elementary School.
- Establish a full-time certified librarian position.

These positions directly address the needs of our keiki and strengthen our ability to implement both the HDOE Strategic Plan and our school's Academic Plan with fidelity.

Mahalo for your consideration of my testimony and for your continued support of small schools.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Oبرا

Principal, Waiāhole Elementary School

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Jennifer Luke-Payne

Organization

Kaaawa Elementary Schookl

Position/Title

Principal

Agenda Item

III. Committee on Weights XIV update regarding weighted student formula for 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school years

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

Dear BOE Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

I strongly urge you to approve the Committee on Weights (COW) recommendations for SY 2026–2027 and SY 2027–2028, particularly Recommendation #2: funding for rural and remote schools.

For small schools like mine, this funding is critical. It has allowed me to:

- Hire a full-time counselor (previously we had one staff member who served as both counselor and student services coordinator).

- Share a 12-month student services coordinator with Waiāhole Elementary School.

- Establish and maintain our Response to Intervention systems.

These positions and systems directly address the needs of our keiki and strengthen our ability to implement both the HDOE Strategic Plan and our school’s Academic Plan with fidelity. And in turn these supports have caused our students to grow academically and mature emotionally.

Mahalo for your consideration of my testimony and for your continued support of my students who just so happened to attend a small school.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Luke-Payne

Principal

Ka’a’awa Elementary School

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Wesley Shinkawa

Organization

Kapolei High School

Position/Title

Principal

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

Aloha Chair Kuraya and members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Wesley Shinkawa, Principal of Kapolei High School. I am writing in strong support of increasing the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees. This isn't just about money; it's about investing in the well-rounded education and personal growth of our students.

The current fee structure, some which have not changed since the 1990s, no longer reflects the true costs associated with providing high-quality co-curricular programs. These programs—ranging from robotics and media clubs to sports and performing arts—are vital to a student's development. They teach leadership, teamwork, discipline, and problem-solving skills that are difficult to replicate in a traditional classroom setting. Unfortunately, the financial burden of these activities often falls on individual teachers and/or families through constant fundraising, which can be an unsustainable and inequitable model.

Increasing the maximum fee would allow schools to more accurately fund these essential programs, ensuring they have the resources needed for equipment, transportation, and specialized coaching. This change would provide predictability and stability for school administrators and a more equitable experience for all students, as it would reduce the reliance on fragmented and often inconsistent fundraising efforts. It would also help to close the gap between the haves and have-nots, ensuring that students from all socioeconomic backgrounds have an equal opportunity to participate and benefit from these enriching activities.

By approving this increase, you will not only be providing financial relief to our schools but also making a powerful statement that you value the holistic development of our students beyond the academic curriculum.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Michelle Hakes

Organization

Pearl City High Yearbook

Position/Title

Co Yearbook Advisor

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

I first started as a yearbook advisor in 2009. At that time the yearbook costs, including shipping and handling, were below the \$50 allowed. Current base price of a color yearbook is now \$50. I locked in this rate a couple years ago and when our contract expires, it will increase. This does not include shipping and handling and tax. Each year we operate at a loss except when doing fundraising such as selling yearbook accessories. Publishing a yearbook has many factors and the advisors should not have to fundraise just to avoid being at a loss. They should be focused on creating a quality book that showcases the school not cutting out pages to make the budget.

Schools in the mainland have already increased their prices and start at \$75. These schools are much closer to the printing plants so they actually pay less in transit freight.

I encourage the Finance Committee to increase the prices so the schools can have a small buffer and to update aging photo equipment. Most schools like mine only get funds based on the number of students in the class and most of the time it's under \$100 that we use on supplies. It is not enough for equipment. I try to apply for grants and places like Donor's Choose to update equipment.

-Michelle Hakes

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

joy takara

Organization

Waipahu High School

Position/Title

Student Activities Coordinator

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

Operating costs for student activities, yearbook production, club membership, cap and gowns, etc. have become more and more challenging over the years as price increases have become inevitable. Principals are also on tight budgets, so are not able to help with any unexpected price increases. More often than not we find ourselves fundraising to cover the difference between our budgets and the necessities of running our programs. Increasing maximum allowable fees would help to combat some of these challenges. If schools do not have a need to increase fees, they can keep their dues the same, but having a higher allowable fee will allow many schools to operate with more flexibility.

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Sheri Hanoa

Organization

Kailua High School

Position/Title

Student Activities Coordinator

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

1. The Problem: An Unrealistic Budget

The current student fee structure has been in place since 1994.

In nearly 30 years, inflation has drastically increased the cost of everything, from supplies to events.

The current fees are simply unrealistic for today's economy.

2. The Evidence: The Need is Clear

We surveyed 30 schools, and all of them agreed that raising student fees is important.

The current fee maximums are not working; 75% of schools already charge the maximum for class dues.

The fees support all aspects of student life, from activities and events to school spirit and morale.

3. The Solution: Investing in Our Students

Raising fees will allow us to offer more activities and engage students who may be disengaged.

It's a necessary step to provide our students with memorable experiences that build school pride.

No student will be left out. All schools have a system in place to make sure every student can participate, regardless of their ability to pay.

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Calliah-Lei Pascua Bolosan

Organization

Hawaii State Student Council

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Calliah-Lei Pascua Bolosan, and I am a junior at Waialua High & Intermediate School. I strongly support the proposal of raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees.

Schools across Hawai'i face constant resource shortages—outdated textbooks, limited classroom supplies, and underfunded extracurricular programs. Increasing allowable fees, with waivers for those in need, would provide schools with essential funding to improve learning conditions and student opportunities. The current funds are unrealistic, as inflation has increased tremendously the past few years, especially after the pandemic. The need for funds conflict with the accessibility of grants and the difficulty of fundraising, as some academic groups or clubs are limited to fundraising only a certain amount of times per school year. Student Activities allow students to engage with their peers and community, and sparks school spirit and pride.

As SBG President, I have seen firsthand how hard it is for students and teachers to raise money for even the most basic needs. Our band program, for example, struggles with repairing instruments, while clubs and sports teams depend on constant fundraisers just to stay active. These challenges take time and energy away from learning and building school spirit. With more support through fees, students could focus less on fundraising and more on developing their talents.

Investing in our education system directly benefits students, and this measure is a necessary step toward ensuring quality and equity in our schools.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Calliah-Lei Pascua Bolosan

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Katarina Gardner

Organization

Waialua High & Intermediate School

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

Aloha Chair and Committee members!

My name is Katarina Gardner and I am testifying in strong support of raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees.

I am an eleventh grade student at Waialua High and Intermediate School. I am in support of raising this fee because doing so would support the funding for school facilitated activities which is important for cultivating well-rounded students who will be prepared to take on the world when they graduate. The fee amount has not been changed in about thirty years while the cost of everything it's supposed to cover has inflated, meaning it is no longer able to properly sustain the factors it should be sustaining.

This testimony and possible raise in fee is important to me because I have firsthand experience with how difficult it is to raise funds. I am part of my school's student body government, so I have participated in and helped organize many fundraisers. It's not easy work, and it takes a lot of selling to achieve a goal. Even that much is just for my grade level activities, the total amount of money that is needed to support everything the school does is huge, and a fee that has lost its value with time is inadequate to work with.

I firmly believe that raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activities fee is necessary for giving the schools in this state the ability that they need to achieve their goals and students the experiences and tools they need to succeed in life. I strongly encourage you to support the raise in fees for the help this will provide our school communities.

Thank you for your time.

Katarina Gardner

Eleventh grade student at Waialua High and Intermediate School

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Princess Faith Ines

Organization

Waialua High & Intermediate School

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

Aloha my name is Princess Faith Ines, a junior student attending Waialua High & Intermediate School. I am writing in strong support of raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees.

As a small school, we often receive less attention and fewer funds compared to larger schools. Because of our limited resources, even small improvements can make a big difference in the daily lives of our students. Increasing the activity fee would give our school more flexibility to address these issues and improve the learning environment.

For instance, during the 2024-2025 school year, our math class had to be relocated to an unoccupied classroom after an incident of a ceiling tile fell in our original room. The new space did not have air conditioning, and the heat made it harder for students to focus and learn. While this may seem like a minor issue, it reflects the kinds of challenges we faced regularly due to limited funding.

Although higher fees may require more from families, I believe many parents would be willing to contribute more if it meant creating a safer and more comfortable school experience for their children.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will support this proposal to raise the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees.

Sincerely,

Princess Faith Ines

Class of 2027

Waialua High & Intermediate School

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Mariella Wasserman

Organization

Hawaii State Student Council

Position/Title

Vice Chair

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony**Upload Written Testimony Here**

- [6_15951_Upload_16_09_2025_Wasserman.pdf](#)

From: Mariella Wasserman

Re: SUPPORT for Raising Co-Curricular Student Activity Fees

Dear Chair Kuraya, Vice Chair Chung, and Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Mariella Wasserman, and I am a 12th-grade student at Hilo High School. I am writing in strong support of raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees. As an active member of my school's student association, I have seen firsthand the challenges we face due to inadequate funding.

The current fees, which have not been increased since before the year 2000, simply cannot keep up with today's costs. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, things are, on average, over 87% more expensive now than they were back then. This significant inflation makes it nearly impossible for our student councils to cover the rising costs of decorations, venues, and supplies needed for student events.

We have had to cut corners and reduce the number of activities offered to make our limited budget stretch. Raising the fees will allow us to continue providing high-quality, engaging events for our students without having to resort to excessive fundraising or compromising on the quality of our activities.

I urge you to support raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees so our councils can continue to provide a vibrant student experience for Hilo High School.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Mariella Wasserman 12th Grade Hilo High School

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Lotus Yasuda

Organization

Hawai'i State Student Council / Waipahu High School

Position/Title

Chairperson / President

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Upload Written Testimony Here

- [6_15952_Upload_16_09_2025_Yasuda.pdf](#)

September 13, 2025

Aloha Chair Kuraya, Vice Chair Chung, and Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Lotus Yasuda. I am a senior at Waipahu High School, serving as Chairperson of the Hawai'i State Student Council. I am writing in strong support of raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees. Increasing student fees will have a positive impact on DOE students such as myself.

As the Student Government President of the second-largest public high school in Hawai'i, and a Title I school, I am fortunate that I do not have to worry too much about funds for my student activities. In Waipahu High School's Student Government, we plan activities almost every week to promote students' school spirit and sense of belonging. Since the start of the school year, we've had activities like bracelet making, sign-waving, assemblies, and Club Rush. Each event utilizes our student activities funding: the beads and elastic for the bracelets, the poster paper and paint for the signs, the balloons, streamers, and banner paper for the assemblies, and the snacks for Club Rush. At first glance, it doesn't seem costly, but costs add up. For schools with smaller populations, it is challenging to plan and successfully execute activities when they are only provided with a maximum of \$10 per student for the entire school year.

As a resident of Hawai'i, I hear and see my parents paying more for everything. From gasoline to eggs, prices have risen in the past couple of years. Why have our student activity fees remained the same for over 25 years? Our advisors and councils are not immune to inflation, but we have been given the same amount of money to budget since 1998. The time has come to raise the maximum for student fees. It doesn't mean that schools will charge this amount; they will do what's best for their students. However, this gives them the ability to charge more for the welfare of the students they serve.

The following testimonies were written by members of the Hawai'i State Student Council. We urge you to support raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Lotus Yasuda
Waipahu High School
Hawai'i State Student Council

Aloha Chair Kuraya, Vice Chair Chung, and Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Coco Hunt, and I am a 12th grade student at Kea'au High School. I am writing in strong support of raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees.. I believe it will be extremely beneficial to Hawai'i public schools to raise the maximum allowable charge for student activities dues.

As SBG president of Kea'au Highschool, and former 2026 Class President all 4 years, I have seen the significant ways that money affects the student activities program. Student activities are essential for promoting a positive highschool environment and producing well-rounded students that have school pride. From sports teams and service clubs, to art classes and academic clubs, these programs play a pivotal role in supplementing learning in the classroom and encourage students to actually enjoy coming to school.

As a dedicated member of my school community , I have seen the wonderful impact that extracurricular activities have on my classmates. However, the current limitations on dues are hindering our ability to provide and quality of programs our students deserve. Increasing these dues are essential for creating a more dynamic and enriching educational environment.

Currently, the limited funds collected from student activity dues barely cover the essential needs of the events/ activities we do. With the rising prices of our resources, our schools struggle to provide adequate resources for clubs, sports, and other vital activities because we don't have enough money for it all. This financial struggle impacts the quality and availability of these programs, limiting opportunities for our students.

I urge you to support Hawai'i public schools in raising student activity dues so more students can experience their dream high school environment. Education is what drives our future generations, and it deserves well funding.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Coco Hunt

SBG President of Kea'au High School

12th Grade

Aloha Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Jade Kuhiiki, and I am a student at Wai'anae High School. I strongly support raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees. As a proud student activist representing my peers, I work closely with my advisor to create events that encourage student engagement and school spirit.

Our council has planned assemblies, spirit weeks, and lunch lounge activities for students to participate in, but we have faced significant challenges due to limited funding. For example, we recently encountered financial difficulties in hosting an end-of-year celebration for our student council executive officers, and we are now attempting to cover the costs through personal fundraising. Unfortunately, with low student participation in fundraising efforts, combined with limited school and personal budgets, we continue to struggle.

It is important to note that the student activity fee budget has not been updated since 1994 due to outdated records. In today's economy, this lack of adjustment has made it extremely difficult to fund student events and opportunities that were once more affordable.

Wai'anae High School's motto is to build leaders for the future—whether that future involves higher education, trade school, or entering the workforce. However, without events like these, which foster leadership, connection, and community, we are forced to make difficult decisions that limit student involvement. Both students and faculty have expressed concerns about these cutbacks and the impact they have on school culture.

As a Hawai'i public school, we should be able to provide not only a place for learning but also a place where students can unite, celebrate one another, and feel proud of their school. Even a small increase of just one or two dollars in student activity fees would allow us to offer more meaningful opportunities without risking elimination of events. I support raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fee not for personal benefit or misuse, but to ensure that students are provided with enriching experiences that strengthen our community.

Mahalo,

Jade Kuhiiki

Wai'anae High School

Aloha Chair Kuraya and Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Gregory Cachero, and I'm a senior at Radford High School. I am in strong support of raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees. I have held various leadership positions such as Class of 2026 President and Student Body President/Treasurer.

These changes are essential to ensure the sustainability of co- and extra-curricular programs. With the last fee adjustment occurring in 2011—and some fees reportedly unchanged since 1998—the strain caused by rising costs is ever more evident. Over the past 20 years, prices have effectively doubled in many areas, making it increasingly difficult to maintain the quality of these programs without updated funding.

In the long term, these changes will enhance services across schools. With an increase in our fees, we will be able to do much more for the student body. In our respective student grade-level governments, we have a tight budget that restricts us in many ways. We're left to heavily rely on fundraising because student dues are unable to cover the costs that were previously entirely covered by dues.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Gregory John Cachero

12th Grade

Radford High School

Aloha Chair Kuraya and Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my strong and unwavering support for the proposed increases in fees for school wide activities. These changes are a necessity to offset the rising prices of today and to ensure the sustainability of both our co and extracurricular problems. With our most recent fee adjustment being 2011, 14 years ago, and some unchanged since 1994, this calls for the need for price adjustments and overall increases. Over these two decades, from 1994, prices have risen, some prices in certain areas doubling over the years leading to now. With this inflation, it makes running our programs with the same quality as before difficult.

With increasing the fees, comes a positive. Schools have the freedom to choose their prices, on their terms. By increasing the max amount and not one that is set for all schools, schools may adjust the price to their discretion and their own students' needs.

Looking at the future, I believe that with these adjustments comes great enhancements for schools across the state. As the Hawaii State Student Council Representative in my Student Body Government, I have seen and made note of how the additional funding can affect the quality and quantity of our school events, especially as the Student Government relies solely on our student dues being paid.

Thank you for considering these changes and supporting bills that support our students.

Kamaha'o Alcoran

10th Grade

Ka'u High School

Dear members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Kiley Parkinson and I am a junior at Kapa'a High School. I am writing in strong support of increasing the maximum allowable curricular student activity fees in Hawaii's schools. The cost of quite literally everything has been rising at an alarming rate, but our student curricular fees maximum hasn't risen in over 30 years. This is not enough to support our extracurricular events that this fee money goes towards.

As a member of the student council and various clubs, I have seen just how much operating these extracurriculars can be. Events like assemblies, homecoming, school dances, and even graduation cost large sums of money, and the outdated priced dues just aren't cutting it anymore. They may have been doing the job 30 years ago, but the cost of things in this economy today has by far surpassed such funding limits.

We recognize that some schools may not want to raise fees for their students, but they have no obligation to charge more whatsoever. If they wished to, their administration could even decide to charge less. We are solely proposing the maximum limit be raised, not enforced. This will allow schools who really need more funding for extracurriculars to be allowed to charge each student a little bit more, overall expanding their accounts further. Once again, this part would be left up to each individual school, therefore giving them a choice to decide how much they would like to charge.

This letter embraces my full support of raising the maximum allowable curricular student activity fees in our schools, so our generation gets the same chance to experience the extracurricular wonders of high school. This need to increase the maximum fee limit is long overdue, and will surely impact the quality of our high school years in a positive light.

Your consideration means the world to us.

Kiley Parkinson
Kapaa High School

Aloha,

My name is Lucia Mejia, and I am a junior at Lahainaluna High School. I strongly support raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees. Increasing these fees will help ensure that our school programs have the resources they need to provide meaningful experiences, enhance student participation, and support the growth of extracurricular opportunities for all students.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha Chair Kuraya and Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Leah Hawkins and I am an 11th grade student at Kohala High School. I am writing in strong support of the fact that I am the junior class president at my school and this role comes with the responsibility of managing class funds. My class is extraordinarily small with a total count of 38 people. Due to this we have an extremely hard time raising funds for our school events. Class dues have not been changed in an extremely long time and I think now is a time for a change.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Leah Hawkins
11th grade
Kohala high school

Aloha Chair Kuraya and Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Maylee Pin, and I am an 11th grade student at Radford High School. I am in strong support of raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Maylee Pin
11th Grade
Radford High School

Aloha members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Noah Felts, and I am the Hawaii State Student Council Representative as well as the Senate Chairperson for Mililani High School and I will be testifying in strong support of raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees. Student dues provide funding for student activities on both the class and student body levels, making it possible to host events and activities ranging from lunch activities to Prom, Senior Luau, Winterball, and more. The current maximum association student due price of \$10 has not been changed since at least 1994, when \$10 had the spending power of about \$21.80 today, which the proposed change to \$20 is still less than. With the prevalence of inflation, \$10 for association student dues and \$8 for class dues nowhere near meet the necessary mark anymore. This leaves student activity coordinators and class advisors scrambling to find ways to fund their activities and events, which often forces them to go out on their own accord to fundraise and find a way to pay for things that should already be covered, for which they are not paid any extra.

As a student leader, I have had the opportunity to help plan events and advocate for student voice, and I now have a better understanding that these funds go directly back to students and allows for us as student leaders to put on the best activities and events possible for our student body to make the lifelong memories that these high school events are supposed to be for.

Thank you for your supporting the youth of Hawaii and for your consideration in making these changes.

- Noah Felts

Aloha Chair Kuraya, Vice Chair Chung, and Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Taylor Wong, and I am a Junior at Kalani High School. I am writing in strong support of raising the maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees because increasing the fee that can be charged allows clubs, the student body, and the school to afford basic expenditures that the current economy does not allow for.

As a member of my school's student council, I know first hand how difficult it is to work around the tight budget. Our homecoming itself takes almost a fourth of our school's activity budget. This doesn't lead to much room for other events throughout the year. Not to mention, club dues aren't enough to cover the simple materials needed.

Student fees have not changed since 1994, over 20 years ago. These outdated fees do not align with the 117.98% increase in the surrounding economy that we live in today. Thus, making it difficult to plan events for students.

In recent years, the economy has changed drastically. With tariffs and inflation skyrocketing prices of materials, school clubs are finding it very difficult to meet the basic materials to run their club. For example, my school's ceramics club barely has enough to buy a couple bags of clay for our members; which means that we have to choose whether to prioritize buying clay or fundraising for more money. Although fundraising is an option, the success rate of making profit is far from high.

I urge you to support raising the allowable fees so more students can participate in clubs, school functions, and class events. A student's high school experience is important, but shouldn't be limited because of outdated fees.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Taylor Wong
11th Grade
Kalani High School

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Treytin Cabral

Organization

Mililani High School

Position/Title

Student Body President

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Upload Written Testimony Here

- [6_15953_Upload_16_09_2025_Cabral.pdf](#)

September 16, 2025

Aloha Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

I am Treytin Cabral, a Senior at Mililani High School, and as the Student Body President of Mililani High School, I write in strong support of fee increases as outlined in the memo from Superintendent Hayashi I had the opportunity to testify on this same matter earlier this year when this item was on the agenda of this committee. I was a junior, but still a part of the student activities program at Mililani High. Now as Student Body President, I see in greater depth the financial constraint the current cap on student activities fees creates. As time goes on, it becomes increasingly apparent that commodities and goods no longer cost the same as they did when the last cap for student fees was enforced.

As a third year member of the student council, I have seen times where we are forced to make some difficult decisions when it comes to planning some of our events. For example, supplying a DJ for our events costs more than twice as much as it did a decade ago. Or even as we are currently in the process of planning our Homecoming festivities, we are finding that our traditional small gift that goes out to all students ends up taking up a decent portion of their paid dues. Annually, we also participate with the DOE in events such as Unity Day or Purple Up Day, and I have seen teachers spending money out of their own pockets to engage students in causes that truly matter.

On the student body council, which I am extremely proud to be a part of, we have the unique privilege to give back to our peers, and create a high school experience that they will carry with them for a long time to come. We make this happen through events ranging from spirit weeks, homecoming, appreciation days/weeks, giveaways, leadership development events, and even events where we get to interact with our complex schools. The work done by student activity programs across the state goes beyond just the students. We also have the fantastic opportunity to give back to staff members, teachers, and communities too that have given us so much. We highly value our bond with our Mililani Community, and we enjoy the opportunities we get within student activities to interact with and give back to the community that we grew up in. The relationship and bond between the schools and communities becomes even stronger with these very events and interactions, and the importance and impact of these relationships cannot be understated.

I firmly believe that it is important to not only keep these crucial events and relationships, but continue to elevate them for years to come. We wouldn't want to lose these important events and bonds because we simply can't afford it. Working to meet this shortfall has been exhaustive, and I strongly believe that an increase is long overdue. As a student myself, I know how important it is to keep these student activities programs well funded. It is crucial for organizations like these to keep morale up, and create a tighter relationship within and between our school communities.

As a student leader, I believe in the power of giving back. In the end, this matter is much more than just a simple raise to a fee. It will go on to affect the way that we are able to give back to the community that we are rooted in, and has given us so much. This fee increase is an investment in the futures of Hawaii's keiki. This increase will ensure that as time goes on, the youth of the future will have the same opportunity as I did to connect with their community, which will in turn inspire more of that giving back that makes a profound impact. Furthermore, as costs continue to soar, it is crucial to meet that need with this very increase in funds. Thank you for your attention and consideration to this very important matter.

Sincerely,



Treytin Cabral

President, Associated Students of Mililani High School

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Julie Matsumoto

Organization

Associated Students of Mililani High School

Position/Title

Recording Secretary

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

To the members of the Board of Education,

I am writing as an officer on the Associated Students of Mililani High School Student Government to express my strong support for the Board's proposal to increase the cap on student body dues.

Mililani High School has maintained the same dues for its students since 1990, even as the costs of organizing student activities, events, and programs have steadily risen. This gap between funding and expenses has limited the ability of classes to plan events that strengthen school spirit, community, and student involvement. For our campus, which is home to over 100 clubs, sports teams, and organizations, the proposed increase would go a long way in bridging this gap.

Even a modest adjustment, when applied across our student population, would provide significant additional funding. This would directly benefit students by enabling more opportunities for cultural events, service projects, class activities, and leadership development programs. Additionally, the increase remains small enough that it will not place an undue burden on families, yet will still have a meaningful and lasting impact on the student experience.

A slight increase in the cap of student dues is far and reasonable; it is modest enough to avoid burdening families while still providing tangible benefits for the entire student body. I am grateful that the Board of Education recognizes the importance of investing in student success, and I strongly support this proposal as a step toward keeping Hawaii high schools at the forefront of excellence.

With regards,
Julie Matsumoto
ASMHS Recording Secretary

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Brayden Fabro

Organization

Mililani High School

Position/Title

Student Body Vice President

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony**Upload Written Testimony Here**

- [6_15955_Upload_16_09_2025_Fabro.pdf](#)

Hello,

My name is Brayden Fabro, and I am a junior attending Mililani High School. I currently serve as the student body vice president, and have had the honor to serve in years past as class president. I am writing this testimony to respectfully ask for your support in raising both student and class dues.

As a former class president for two years, I was able to plan many events such as spirit weeks, lunch activities, homecoming class competitions, and banquets. Through that experience, I was able to see both council members and classmates come together in committees and work hard so that they could make these activities enjoyable and memorable for students. However, when it came time to shop for the materials we needed for these events, we often had to cut down on items and scale back our ideas because of the high costs. I strongly believe that the rising costs of decorations, supplies, and venues limited what we could achieve as a team. It felt like our hard work was based on what we could afford, rather than what we envisioned would be the best experience for our classmates.

Now, as the student body vice president, I have had the privilege to serve our student body of over 2,000 students. Compared to my time serving on class council, I am involved in planning an even greater number and variety of events, such as pep rallies, club fair, leadership workshops, and all aspects of homecoming. In our council meetings, we brainstorm many ideas for these events that we believe will be meaningful and beneficial for students. However, I feel like even at the student body level, our ideas are often constrained by budget limitations. Whether it is ordering better or unique decorations to make a pep rally more engaging or creating more interactive and fun lunch activities, our ideas are often scaled back in an effort to balance our funds for the other events we have to plan. I strongly believe that these constraints prevent us from planning an event to the full potential that we envision it to be.

The financial constraints that I have seen on both the class and student body levels make me strongly believe that raising class and student dues, even by \$2-\$3, would provide us with the flexibility to bring more of our ideas to life and allow events to reach their full potential without placing too much financial stress on students. By addressing rising costs due to inflation in recent years, I believe that both class and student body councils would be able to plan more engaging, inclusive, and memorable events. This flexibility would not only benefit students participating in these events, but also those planning them, by giving more resources and supplies which would allow for more creativity and imagination. Overall, this would give students not only at Mililani High School, but across the state, the opportunity to participate and enjoy the experiences that connect us together.

Thank you for your time,
Brayden Fabro
Student Body Vice President, Mililani High School

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Clark Jestoni Palting

Organization

W.R. Farrington High School

Position/Title

Hawaii State Student Council Corresponding Secretary & Senior Class President

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Upload Written Testimony Here

- [6_15956_Upload_16_09_2025_Palting.pdf](#)

Aloha Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

Thank you for your continuous support towards schools around the state. As the vice president of my grade's student council, I am in full support of this request as funds from student dues go right back to the students we serve. For example, current student dues have paid for bus trips to class events, so students didn't have to pay a larger fee for their fare. If student dues increase, councils can afford to host larger and cheaper events. In the future, students may be attending once in a lifetime experiences (such as: prom, graduation, homecoming) that cost little to no dollars.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Arabella Cruz

Aloha Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

I am in support of raising the dues. As I am serving my 3rd year as class president in the student council, I noticed that our events are limited because we don't have a ton of money to support our creative ideas. Although we fundraise as much as we can, it still isn't enough to fund every big event for free. I want to add, since a ton of clubs are competing with fundraising - it makes it difficult for clubs and student councils on campus to make money. In our small community, it gets to a point on how much one can afford to keep supporting fundraisers. We are a title 1 school so it's hard for students to pay off a pricey bid sale so with the help of being able to use money from our class account will be beneficial because we can cover some expenses. As inflation increases, dues should also be raised. The cost of supplies and materials are becoming more expensive which is draining our account rapidly. So yes, I really support this because it would be so helpful for all our schools' financial situations.

Mahalo,
Ciana Guillermo

Aloha Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

Mahalo for your continued commitment to serving the keiki of Hawai'i. As a student leader from a Title I school, I have seen firsthand how essential low-cost, engaging activities are to our campus community. Our council works hard to provide events that create lifelong memories, yet it has become increasingly challenging to plan and fund these experiences.

High school milestones like dances, spirit weeks, and other student activities are moments students cherish well beyond graduation. Unfortunately, rising costs mean that some students cannot afford to participate. Increasing student dues would ease the financial strain on student councils and open the door for more students to be involved.

Some may ask, "Why not simply fundraise?" In reality, fundraising has grown more difficult. We often reach out to the same families and community members, and when many groups fundraise simultaneously, the support becomes spread thin. In some cases, the expenses of fundraising even outweigh the profits.

It is striking to note that school dues have remained unchanged since 1994. What eight dollars could cover then barely buys a fast-food meal today, let alone supports vibrant student activities. These programs are a vital part of the school experience, and I fear they will diminish if funding does not keep pace with costs.

I respectfully urge you to consider raising student dues for the upcoming school year to ensure that student councils can continue providing meaningful opportunities for all.

Mahalo for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Clark Jestoni Palting

Aloha Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

Thank you for all you do to support students in Hawai'i. As a student at Farrington High School, I have seen how important student activities are for building community and creating lasting memories. Many events, like dances, clubs, and spirit weeks, are becoming harder to fund with rising costs. Increasing student dues will allow more students to participate and ensure our council can continue offering engaging programs. I respectfully urge you to support this increase so that all students have the opportunity to be involved.

Mahalo,
Alexa Mergillano

Aloha Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

I fully support the proposed increase in the student fees, as it will directly enhance our Student Activities Programs we have at our High School. With additional funding, we can expand our events, workshops, and also our student-led initiatives that foster our campus engagement and community. This increase will also allow us to bring in more diverse speakers, host larger events, and also even provide better resources to our student organizations. Investing in student activities means investing in students well-being, leadership development, and campus culture. We respectfully urge your support in making this meaningful investment in our student experience for this upcoming school year to ensure that our student organizations can have a significant chance for everyone.

Mahalo for your time and kind consideration,

Lorraine-Marie Ader Nelson

Hello Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

Mahalo for your continued commitment to serving the keiki of Hawai'i. As I am a part of the student body council of the class of 2027 I believe that we should increase our dues because it would really help contribute to all the classes. As I am a part of the student council I think raising the price of dues would really help out our class with money. Others might say that we should fundraise but there is a very complicated process students and advisors would have to go through to execute the event. Raising the dues would be very helpful towards events like froshmore, prom, senior lua, and graduation. These events are very special to students because these are events to show the success of all students.

Mahalo,
Jazlyne Padron

Aloha Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

The costs of executing school events have significantly increased, while the funds we receive from student dues have remained the same. This makes it difficult for our school councils to plan and carry out student activities due to limited funds.

The money we receive from student dues is essential to ensuring that we are able to provide quality events for the student body. Yes, we do try to frequently fundraise to cover costs, which has been helpful. But the profits made simply do not compare to the constant rising and inflating costs of event planning.

I hope you can consider raising the student dues for the upcoming school year, as I believe that it would create a more enjoyable school environment and significantly enhance the overall student experience.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Maya Huang

Aloha Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

As a part of my school council and a member of my student body that regularly participates in class activities, I understand how difficult it has been to plan and execute events for my school due to the rising costs of materials. The increase in student dues will benefit council members and schools statewide in providing the necessary funds for school events such as prom and graduation, to name a few. I urge you to consider raising the annual student dues to allow schools and councils to receive sufficient funds needed to execute memorable school events.

Mahalo,
Ava Rabang

Aloha,

I kindly thank you for your service towards the keiki of Hawai'i. As a student from a Title I school, I have experienced firsthand how important engaging and low-cost activities are to our school and the students.

Money and funds are always an obstacle for people in our school (council, advisors, student clubs, sports, etc.), and have been the downside of a memorable high school experience.

By increasing student dues, a weight would be carried from the backs of those who are doing the best they can with what they have for the students of W.R. Farrington High School.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Althea Marie De Guzman

Aloha Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

Thank you for supporting students across Hawai'i. As a student at Farrington High School and a member of the Student Council Spirit Committee, I've seen how important activities like dances, rallies, and spirit weeks are for building school pride and creating lasting memories. These events help students feel more connected to their school and give everyone something positive to look forward to. Unfortunately, with rising costs, it has become harder to fund these activities, and some students are unable to participate.

Fundraising helps, but it is not enough since many groups rely on the same families and community members, and sometimes the costs are higher than the profits. Student dues have also stayed the same since 1994, even though the value of eight dollars today is much less than it was back then. As someone in the Spirit Committee, I know that higher dues would allow us to plan events that students will truly enjoy and remember.

I respectfully ask you to consider raising student dues so that councils can continue giving students fun, memorable, and inclusive experiences that will benefit them long after graduation.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Ashea Angel

Aloha Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

First and foremost, I would like to extend and express my sincere gratitude for your continued support in helping our school here in Hawai'i. My name is TR Filemoni, and I have the privilege of serving as the Associated Student Body President this year at Farrington High School, Home of The Govs.

As a student leader, I believe it is both my duty and honor to advocate for the needs and future of my fellow student body in any way possible. Whether that be through organizing school events, leading executive council meetings, or mentoring others in their leadership journey, I am committed to uplifting our student body.

Being a student raised in the heart of Kalihi, I take pride in representing my school and community. I believe that, with the increase in student dues, more opportunities could be created for students all around the state of Hawai'i.

I understand the financial challenges many families face, especially here in Hawai'i; but I also believe in the power of community. By investing in our students now, we're not only supporting their current growth but we are also laying down the foundation for future generations. Together, we can ensure that every keiki has better access to the resources, experiences, and support they need to succeed.

Mahalo for taking the time to read this message,

TR Filemoni

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Erin Dechoso

Organization

Mililani High School

Position/Title

Student

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Write Testimony

Board of Education

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Thursday, September 18, 2025

11:00AM, Conference Room 404

Support for agenda item VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Aloha, Board Members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

My name is Erin Dechoso and I am currently a Senior attending Mililani High School. I am testifying in support of agenda item VI.

Being in my final year of High School I've been a part of many co-curricular activities such as the theater/drama department. Myself and other students acknowledge the difficulties of reaching our co-curricular activities fullest potential without enough financial support from student fees. I believe that it's important to raise student fees in order to achieve the best experience possible for myself and my peers. As inflation continues and prices constantly rise, the student fees should rise in response. The current fees are simply not enough for our specific co-curriculars to keep up. Though it won't be able to benefit me, it gives the next generation of students more opportunities to create a wonderful high school experience and that's all I could hope for as I close out my own high school life.

I hope you'll consider raising student fees for co-curricular activities because it's important to financially support these activities so students can enjoy the experience to the fullest.

Sincerely,

Erin Dechoso

Mililani High School

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Zachary Espino

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Upload Written Testimony Here

- [6_15958_Upload_17_09_2025_Espino.pdf](#)

Testimony of Zachary Espino

Alumnus, Kailua High School and Hawai'i State Student Council

Date: September 18, 2025

To: Hawai'i State Board of Education Finance & Infrastructure Committee

Re: **Support for Agenda Item VI – Maximum Allowable Co-Curricular Student Activity Fees**

Aloha Chair Kuraya and Members of the Committee:

My name is Zachary Espino, and I submit this testimony in **strong SUPPORT** of Agenda Item VI, Maximum Allowable Co-Curricular Student Activity Fees, which proposes to increase the maximum fees that schools may charge.

I am a proud graduate of the Hawai'i public school system. I served as Student Body President at Kailua High School and Vice Chairperson of the Hawai'i State Student Council during my senior year of high school, and I participated in student council throughout all of my middle school and high school years. These experiences shaped my leadership journey and showed me how essential adequate funding is for a strong student activities program.

I attended Title I schools, so I saw firsthand how student fees can be challenging for many families. I remember classmates who worried about being left out of activities because of costs. Our student activities coordinators and school leaders always worked creatively to help so every student could participate. Their efforts proved that when resources are limited, schools must stretch to make sure no one is excluded.

Serving a school of about 850 students, I also witnessed how the ceiling on student activity fees limited what we could offer. From campus-wide events to leadership training, every opportunity relied on fees that have not increased since 2004.

The Department of Education proposal to raise the maximum allowable fees is a practical and necessary step. It simply updates the ceiling, allowing schools to adjust if needed while still giving principals the ability to charge less or provide waivers so that every student can take part.

Approving this adjustment will allow schools to maintain and expand co-curricular programs that build leadership, foster community, and enrich the student experience just as these programs did for me.

I respectfully ask the Board of Education to adopt the proposed increases under Agenda Item VI so that future student leaders can enjoy the same opportunities that shaped my own path.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Name

Danielle Castro

Agenda Item

VI. Maximum allowable co-curricular student activity fees

Position

Support

Written Testimony

Upload Written Testimony Here

- [6_15959_Upload_17_09_2025_Castro.pdf](#)

September 16, 2025

Aloha members of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee,

The costs of goods and services, especially post-pandemic, have continued to rise. However, funding via student activity fees have not changed to meet this since 1998. **I am in support of the proposed fee increases** by the Department of Education.

We have seen over the years that schools have been able to raise the price of event bids and graduation participation fees since that could be done at the school level. We need your help (and approval) to do the same for student activity fees, which is the sole source of funding for our schools' student activities programs. These funds could help provide leadership training opportunities for student leaders, bring in guest speakers, provide more funding for giveaways or student recognition, hire vendors, and so much more. Just this past year, school bus prices have more than doubled (for example, a bus that was once \$250 now costs \$550 to rent for a group to do a field trip, limiting many clubs and organizations, let alone classes, ability to complement learning and opportunities via off campus excursions). This is just one example of many areas that have seen a cost increase.

The student fees increase can also help smaller schools that bring in even less money through fee collection. It will increase the capacity of our clubs and grade level organizations to provide more for their peers. As a co-advisor at Mililani High School, we exhaust our budget annually through numerous events ranging from school wide assemblies to Homecoming, Award Recognition, Spirit Weeks, Appreciation days, giveaways, and so much more to increase student and staff morale and keep our school community engaged. We've had to work really hard, seek donations at times, and fundraise to stretch our dollars. There is the old adage, "You get what you pay for," and at times, this may be true; quality and long term investments are sacrificed at the expense of a cheaper alternative because we are limited by our budget. In the business world, this type of practice will lead to customer dissatisfaction and at times, higher costs in the long run. I believe our customers, the students, deserve better in a school year at the expense of what may amount to two Starbucks runs in a week - an increase of \$10 in student fees can go a long way in any category.

This fee increase is long overdue in supporting our school programs and the students we serve. It will alleviate some of the cost constraints we face and allow our schools to redirect efforts and focus back on implementation of activities for our students. This memo includes many other fees in areas that have seen production costs go up (ie. Graduation Cap and Gown, Yearbook, Newspaper, School Lunches). I support the Board of Education increasing these fee caps to meet the economic realities we are facing.

Thank you for your consideration.



Danielle Castro
Mililani High School