

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHERINE PAYNE
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
1111 Bishop Street, Suite 516, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

FOR: HB 2453 Relating to Charter Schools
DATE: Monday, February 08, 2016
TIME: 2:00 PM
COMMITTEE(S): House Committee on Education
ROOM: Conference Room 309
FROM: Tom Hutton, Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Testimony in support HB 2453

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Ohno, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 2797, which would appropriate \$200,000 to make start-up grants available to pre-opening charter schools that would be priority system needs identified by the Commission. We are grateful to Chair Takumi and Representative Lopresti for their introduction of the proposal and his interest in public charter schools as a potential part of the solution to school overcrowding.

In its current Request for Proposals for new charter schools, the Commission has particularly welcomed applications to create schools that would provide additional enrollment capacity in geographic areas where existing department of education schools are already exceeding, have already reached, or are projected to reach or exceed, full enrollment capacity; or that would serve communities where existing public schools are not performing well under state academic measures. While welcoming such proposals, the Commission has not lowered its rigorous approval bar for these applications.

The targeted availability of grants for start-up schools would add a significant incentive for these especially desirable applications and could provide important support to some newly created, pre-opening schools in their start-up year before they become fully operational and are able to draw per-pupil and other state funding. For a time before the Commission’s creation

start-up grants were made available to newly approved pre-opening schools. Hawaii is not currently in a position to avail itself of federal grants that have been created for this important purpose, although that is something the Commission intends to pursue.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.