

March 13, 2026 at 10:30 AM

TO: Teachers Standards Committee

FROM: Robert Kai Irwin

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY

MEETING: Teachers Standards Committee Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: IV. H. NBI 25-22 Revised Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS

Aloha mai e ke kōmike Teachers Standards Committee,

My name is Robert Kai Irwin. I serve as a Hawaiian language curriculum developer and program manager for our network of Kaiapuni schools, teachers, and ‘ohana. I am testifying in **SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS** of NBI 25-22 regarding Revised Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements.

The Hawaiian Permit is an essential strategy for addressing the urgent and ongoing shortage of qualified Kaiapuni teachers by recruiting fluent Hawaiian language speakers into the teaching profession while they are working toward their teaching credentials. Fluent Hawaiian-language speakers are the most critical resource for Kaiapuni schools, yet they remain among the most difficult educators to recruit and retain. Without an adequate supply of qualified Kaiapuni teachers, the opening of new Kaiapuni classrooms cannot occur—regardless of student demand.

I respectfully ask the Committee to pass NBI 25-22 to ensure our schools have the fluent teachers our haumāna deserve.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify,

Robert Kai Irwin

TO: March 13, 2026 at 10:30 AM

FROM: Faryn “Kalei” Oliver

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY

MEETING: Teachers Standards Committee Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: IV. H. NBI 25-22 Revised Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS

Aloha mai e ke kōmike Teachers Standards Committee,

My name is Faryn “Kalei” Oliver and I am a kumu Kaiapuni (Kaiapuni teacher). I am testifying in support with comments of NBI 25-22.

The most pressing issue facing our Kaiapuni and Hawaiian-medium educational settings is the chronic shortage of qualified, fluent, and pedagogically trained educators. **The Hawaiian Permit is an essential strategy for addressing this urgent and ongoing shortage.** However, a permit alone is a temporary fix. This policy transforms the permit from a "stop-gap" into a "bridge" by:

- **Ensuring Quality via Support:** By requiring EPPs to provide ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i instructional support during clinical experiences, we ensure that permit holders are not left to struggle in isolation. This reduces burnout and increases the retention of fluent speakers in the classroom.
- **Creating a Clear Pipeline:** Encouraging permit holders to enroll in Kaiapuni-specific EPPs acknowledges that linguistic proficiency and pedagogical skill must go hand-in-hand. This policy helps move permit holders toward full licensure, creating a permanent solution to the workforce shortage rather than a revolving door of temporary staff.
- **Professionalizing the Role:** By requiring job-relevant professional development aligned with a cultural growth plan, the HTSB is treating permit holders as the professionals they are, ensuring they grow in their craft while serving our *haumāna* (students).

I strongly support the provision for a **periodic review every three years** in collaboration with the Hawaiian Workgroup. The landscape of Hawaiian immersion is shifting rapidly. A mandatory review cycle ensures that the permit remains a responsive tool—not a static hurdle—that can adapt to the evolving needs of our community and the fluctuating demands of the labor market.

NBI 25-22 Revised strikes the perfect balance between high standards and the practical realities of our current teacher shortage. It holds programs and employers accountable while providing permit holders with the linguistic and cultural nourishment they need to succeed.

I urge the Board to adopt these recommendations in full to ensure the continued revitalization of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i and the stability of our Kaiapuni schools.

Mahalo for your dedication to our teachers and the future of Hawaiian education.

Faryn “Kalei” Oliver



[EXTERNAL] NBI 25-22 HTSB Testimony_ 03_13_26 TSC

From Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala <pkeala@hawaii.edu>

Date Wed 3/11/2026 9:26 AM

To HTSB <htsb@hawaii.gov>

TO: March 13, 2026 at 10:30 AM

FROM: Dr. Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY

MEETING: Teachers Standards Committee Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: IV. H. NBI 25-22 Revised Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS

Aloha mai e ke kōmike Teachers Standards Committee,

My name is Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala and I am a parent of Kaiapuni students, a previous Kaiapuni teacher, an Assistant Professor at Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language, and the Vice Chair of the ‘Aha Ho‘okō of the ‘Aha Kauleo. I am testifying in SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS of NBI 25-22.

As one of the most immediate and pressing challenges for the Kaiapuni schools is a severe shortage of qualified Kaiapuni teachers who are fluent ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i speakers, the Hawaiian Permit allows those with Hawaiian language fluency to become teachers while working to fulfill their appropriate degree and licensure requirements. Kaiapuni teachers with the Hawaiian Permit must be working towards HLI licensure with one of Hawai‘i’s SATEP pathways. At the very basis of being a Kaiapuni teacher is Hawaiian language and cultural fluency. The Hawaiian Permit ensures that those who are allowed to teach in Kaiapuni already have high levels of Hawaiian language fluency. While our hope is that in the future we will have licensed teachers in all of our Hawai‘i schools, the Hawaiian permit supports Kaiapuni schools to continue to hire Hawaiian language speakers until we get to that point.

Mahalo, Dr. Pililuaikekaiohilo Keala

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Pililuaikekaiohilo M.Q. Keala, EdD

Hope Polopeka (*Assistant Professor*)



Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language
Hawai'i inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
2540 Maile Way, Spalding 252
Honolulu Hawai'i 96822

"I pa'a i kona kupuna, 'a'ole kākou e puka"

TO: March 13, 2026 at 10:30 AM

FROM: Kananinohea Māka‘imoku

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY

MEETING: Teachers Standards Committee Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: IV. H. NBI 25-22 Revised Policy on Hawaiian Permit Requirements, Program Responsibilities, and Review

POSITION: SUPPORT

Aloha mai e ke kōmike Teachers Standards Committee,

My name is Kananinohea Māka‘imoku. I submit this testimony in my personal capacity as a member of the Hawaiian Workgroup. I also bring to this testimony my experience as a first-language ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i speaker, a graduate of the first Kaiapuni class, a former Kaiapuni classroom kumu, a teacher educator who leads an HTSB-approved Kaiapuni licensure program, and Chair of the ‘Aha Kauleo Kaiapuni Advisory Council. I have also collaborated in the redesign of the Hawaiian Permit to support licensure and workforce pathways specific to the Kaiapuni field.

I strongly support NBI 25-22 and thank the committee and HTSB staff for their diligent work on this draft. I appreciate that the revised policy clearly focuses on the Hawaiian Permit and recognizes permittees who are at different stages of pursuing their teaching credentials.

The Hawaiian Permit incorporates input from key Kaiapuni stakeholders, establishes measures of Hawaiian language fluency readiness, and requires each permit holder to follow an individualized professional growth plan toward full licensure. This structure allows schools to identify fluent speakers within the Hawaiian language community and support their development as educators.

Kaipuni education operates within a distinct context. Even as student enrollment continues to grow, ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i remains a severely endangered language. Unlike English-medium pathways that draw from a large pool of fluent English speakers, the Kaiapuni teacher workforce must be cultivated from a small and finite population of fluent Hawaiian language speakers.

For this reason, the Hawaiian Permit is a critical strategy for creating and sustaining a speaker-to-teacher pathway within the Kaiapuni education system, allowing schools to recruit fluent speakers while they develop the professional knowledge and credentials needed for full licensure.

Strengthening this pathway ensures that Kaiapuni students continue to learn from educators who are both trained teachers and fluent, culturally grounded speakers of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your commitment to supporting policies that sustain the growth and future of Kaiapuni education.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kananinohea". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kananinohea Māka'imoku