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Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator David Ige, Chair  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

March 28, 2014

Dear Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and Committee Members:

This testimony is submitted in opposition to HB1675 HD1 SD1, with recommended amendments.

The Hui for Excellence in Education (HE'E) is a diverse coalition of over 40 parent and community organizations dedicated to improving student achievement by increasing family and community engagement and partnerships in our schools. Our member list is attached.

Act 167, establishing a minimum number of student instructional hours and days per year, was passed in 2010 for three primary purposes:

1. Prevent future furloughs for students.
2. Provide instructional time equity among Hawaii students and their mainland peers.
3. Establish transparency and clarity in the definition and amount of instructional time provided by each school.

Act 167 sent a clear message to the community, that the legislature takes education seriously and that reduction of student instructional time would never again be compromised due to budget issues. All Hawaii students would receive the same amount of instructional time as their peers in Hawaii and on the mainland. All Hawaii families would know that their child receives the same amount of instruction as every other student in the state. Hawaii is unique, the only state that is one school district, with one funding source, and one union contract for all teachers. This should help insure that equity exists across the state. Instructional time for students should be no different. The DOE has undertaken the task of aligning the bell schedules for secondary schools and has made great progress. We support their effort to continue to meet the instructional time goals set forth in Act 167.

We agree with the bill that the Board of Education should define "student instructional hours."

However, regarding the deletion of the 1080 instructional hours, we recommend the following amendments:

1. Defer the implementation date until the next bargaining year so that any additional costs associated with increasing the time can be included in that contract.
2. Apply the increased time to 1080 instructional hours to secondary schools only; for elementary schools, apply the increased time to 990 instructional hours, which is

consistent with instructional time for secondary and elementary schools nationally (see attachment).

The process of aligning the secondary schools has been difficult, but the Department of Education (DOE), principals, staff and School Community Councils (SCCs) have worked hard to find schedules that work for their schools. If they wish, schools can, under the law, apply for a waiver. This is an important component of the law and if a school can make a compelling argument for the waiver, the Board of Education (BOE) can grant the request. This provides a reasonable option for a school with unique circumstances. Finally, it should be noted that increasing the minimum student instructional time in the future for secondary schools, amounts to an increase from 5 hour 30 minutes to a 6 hour instructional day plus lunch and passing, or an approximately 7 hour day such as 8:00 am – 3:00 pm for students. This still allows time for after school activities, sports, and jobs for students. It would also make Hawaii student instructional time align with or exceed more than 50% of states, which is huge increase from 2010 when our state had some of the lowest instructional minutes in the country.

We strongly encourage you to stay the course with this law, and consider our amendments as a compromise.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration. Our opposition to this bill represents a 75% consensus or more of our membership.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura  
HE'E Coalition Director

HE'E Member List

Academy 21  
After-School All-Stars Hawaii  
Alliance for Place Based Learning  
\*Castle Complex Community Council  
Center for Civic Education  
Coalition for Children with Special Needs  
\*DOE Windward District  
\*Faith Action for Community Equity  
Fresh Leadership LLC  
Girl Scouts Hawaii  
\*Good Beginnings Alliance  
Harold K.L. Castle Foundation  
\*Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
Hawai'i Athletic League of Scholars  
\*Hawai'i Charter School Network  
\*Hawai'i Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition  
\*Hawaii State PTSA  
Hawai'i State Student Council  
Hawai'i State Teachers Association  
Hawai'i P-20  
Hawai'i 3Rs  
Head Start Collaboration Office  
It's All About Kids  
\*INPEACE  
Joint Venture Education Forum  
Junior Achievement of Hawaii  
Kamehameha Schools  
Kanu Hawai'i  
Keiki to Career Kaua'i  
Kupu A'e  
\*Leaders for the Next Generation  
Learning First  
McREL's Pacific Center for Changing the Odds  
Our Public School

\*Pacific Resources for Education and Learning  
\*Parents and Children Together  
\*Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i  
Punahou School PUEO Program  
Teach for America  
The Learning Coalition  
US PACOM  
University of Hawai'i College of Education  
YMCA of Honolulu  
Voting Members (\*)