



Senate Committees on Education
and Judiciary and Labor
Friday, February 3, 2012
2:15 p.m.

SB 2993, Relating to Education.

Dear Chairs Tokuda and Hee and Committee Members:

On behalf of the University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA), our union stands strongly opposed to the passage of SB 2993. The elimination of the principle of tenure, whether the educators are either teachers or principals, violates a tenet that has been a standard of the American system of public education. Tenure is more than just a form of job security, it is the basis upon which the profession has been built, and which has brought about the most inclusive system of public education on globe, K through 20. Tenure sets the professional standards for education based on the concept of academic freedom. It has precluded the “politicization” of American public education and the imposition of doctrinaire curricula, whether based on political or religious ideologies. The struggle over the centuries has been against the forces that seek to apply “one mind” to the public education of our children, young adults, and adults under the color of government. Hawaii, of all places should both understand and appreciate the concept of tenure and the positive impact it has in the development of a multi-cultural society.

I am sure that this bill was not introduced with any thought to the consequences beyond a misguided assumption that it would allow the Hawaii State Department of Education to terminate teachers and principals, without recourse, based on the opinion of unidentified individuals. The potential abuse of this authority does not further any improvement in student learning outcomes, nor does it offer our citizens a hope for a better future. The elimination of tenure in the DOE will not advance the stated educational goals articulated either by our Governor or any member of this Legislature. There is absolutely no objective evidence from any other jurisdiction in the United States of America that shows a positive correlation between the elimination of tenure for teachers and improvements in student achievement. This bill undermines open and challenging collaboration among teachers and principals by imposing conditions that easily silence academic debate.

Tenure and academic freedom have allowed our colleges and universities to be the envy of people around the world, and it has led to discoveries and innovations that have literally changed the lives of human beings.

**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
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We urge this committee, the leadership of the Senate, and all members of the 2012 Legislature to reject this proposed legislation.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.N. Musto", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

J.N. Musto, Ph.D.
Executive Director