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PRESS RELEASE

August 9, 2010

HSTA RECOMMENDS NEIL ABERCROMBIE FOR GOVERNOR *Knowledge of education issues and unwavering support for public schools cited*

(HONOLULU, HAWAII) – The Hawaii State Teachers Association, representing Hawaii’s 13,000 public school teachers, today recommended that its members and Hawaii voters support Neil Abercrombie in the Democratic primary election race for governor.

“Neil Abercrombie understands the link between a strong public school system and a strong Hawaii economy,” said HSTA President Wil Okabe. “We believe Neil Abercrombie has been a champion of public education and as governor, he will give education the priority needed to benefit our keiki and Hawaii’s future.”

Speaking at HSTA’s office in Moanalua today, Okabe said a key factor in supporting Abercrombie was his national and local leadership record – including in the Hawaii State Legislature and Congress – that demonstrate his longtime commitment to Hawaii’s families.

“Education is the key to Hawaii’s future,” Okabe said. “We must have a new administration with the ability and vision to pull everyone together to overcome these difficult times and to make Hawaii a place our children can choose to call home.”

“Having the support of the Hawaii State Teachers Association, along with the University of Hawaii Professional Assembly, means a lot to me,” Abercrombie said. “It means the people who we entrust with the education of our young people—Hawaii’s most precious resources—have put their faith and trust in me.”

The Association also cited Abercrombie’s stand on changing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), as well as his understanding of and commitment to educational issues, and support of resources to make Hawaii’s students, teachers, and schools successful.

“When Neil Abercrombie says he believes in strong public schools, we know he means it,” Okabe said. “His mother and brother were teachers, and Neil was an educator himself. His firsthand experience on the front lines of education gives him a unique perspective on what our schools need.”

The recommendation comes after a lengthy process that involved the following activities performed by teachers from around the state:

- An extensive review of the candidates’ track records on issues of interest to teachers
- A questionnaire completed by the candidates
- An interview

The interview process is thorough, inclusive, and democratic. All candidates are given the opportunity to apply for a recommendation. Those interested are provided a questionnaire. After submitting it, they are interviewed by HSTA members who represent teachers from around the state. Each candidate’s questionnaire and the interview are reviewed, along with candidate’s voting records if available. Based on the review, the Government Relations Committee makes its recommendations. The HSTA Board of Directors, with representatives from each school district, makes the final recommendations.

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About HSTA

The Hawaii State Teachers Association is the exclusive representative of more than 13,000 public school teachers statewide. As the state affiliate of the 3.2-million member National Education Association, HSTA assists teachers with collective bargaining, legislative, and professional development issues.