



UNIVERSITY
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MĀNOA

Department of Second Language Studies

1/28/16

Dear Fellow Teachers,

News of the strike by state teachers in Slovakia has spread worldwide, even reaching the distant islands of the U.S. state of Hawai'i, and my own Department, with its strong international orientation extends our support to you.

Teachers need decent working conditions. They need to be treated as professionals. They need adequate pay, facilities, and professional respect. At some point, faced with hard-hearted penny-pinching administrations, they have to stand up for their beliefs. It is the correct, ethical and professional thing to do, when all other avenues of dialogue have been exhausted, to withhold one's labor. That is the traditional and correct thing to do.

I am certain that other teachers here in Hawai'i, if they learned the full details of this case, would likewise extend their support, and their solidarity, across the thousands of miles that lie between Slovakia and Hawai'i.

In fact, the distance between the hearts of international teachers in Hawai'i and those in Slovakia is no distance at all, and certainly no obstacle when it comes to support. As a member of the university teachers union of the University of Hawai'i, we have on occasion done the same as you are now. It was some years ago that both the state elementary and high school teachers' union, as well as the university professors' union, both went out on strike together. We had no other option if we wanted to save the education of our students.

These steps are not taken lightly and they are not selfish. It is the students whose lives are harmed when administrators blindly try to cut costs. Thus we know we are doing the right thing, as we are acting on behalf of those weaker than us, and in support of the interests of the nation and the state.

Best wishes, aloha, and solidarity!

Graham Crookes
Chair
Professor