



# **UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

## **Legislative Testimony**

---

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Tuesday, March 3, 2015 at 1:30 pm

By  
Robert Bley-Vroman, Chancellor  
And  
Clifton Tanabe, JD  
Executive Assistant, Office of the Chancellor  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### **HB 96 HD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII**

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget. This measure will establish an office of the ombudsman at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and appropriates funds for the operating cost of the office.

It should be noted that the Office of the Ombudsperson already exists on the UH Mānoa organizational chart. What is required is funding for the Ombudsperson position, rather than establishment of the unit.

During the two years that the UH Mānoa had funding for the Ombudsperson office, of the nearly 700 visitors per year, an estimated 300-350 were faculty and staff and roughly 350 were students.

A former ombuds officer at MIT estimates that the savings from prevented lawsuits and prevented formal grievances, along with value of the retention of valuable employees who would have left the University due to conflicts and hostile workplace environments, are at least equal to the costs of operating the ombuds office.

Researchers have discovered that active administrators and managers typically can spend between an average of 40 percent of their time dealing with workplace conflicts.

Thank you for your time and consideration,