



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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By
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And
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HB493 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and members of the committee:

We strongly support HB493 because funding for both a permanent Director position and Associate Specialist position will better equip the University of Hawai'i Center on Aging (COA) in fulfilling its mission. Currently, with an Interim Director and temporary researchers, funded through grants and contracts, the COA's capacity to expand is limited. However, with funding for a permanent director and a permanent faculty position, we will be able to expand our capacity and responsiveness to the needs of our state.

Funding for these positions will enhance COA's capacity in all 3 key areas of our *mission*; to develop innovative programs of interdisciplinary gerontological education and practice, to promote collaborative and interdisciplinary research within the university and other academic partners, and provide state-of-the art information to policy makers, program managers, clinicians and the general public.

With base funding and support, COA can:

- Reinstate (currently on hold) and administer the undergraduate and graduate certificate in gerontology to build a workforce that is prepared to care for our aging population
- Collaborate and conduct high quality research to improve older adults' quality life and improve systems of care for older adults.
- Greater capacity to respond to requests from the State to address the escalating needs of our growing aging population, including issues of long-term supports and services (LTSS), caregiving, dementia and end of life, systems change, and workforce development

The Center on Aging is committed to improving the quality of life of all older adults in Hawai'i, and has the ability to be recognized locally and nationally for both education and research endeavors. With funding for these positions, we will have a greater capacity to respond to State needs, including a workforce that is educated and prepared

to address an aging population and applied research to improve the care and quality of life of older adults.

Please note, we strongly support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.