



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture
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By
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And
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HB 995 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Onishi, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support with amendment requested, of HB 995, which appropriates funds to support the Future Farmers of America and the 4-H youth education programs.

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget. We note that our support includes a request to amend the funding provision for 4-H to provide a grant to the 4-H Foundation, rather than an appropriation for this purpose to the University of Hawai'i.

Future Farmers of America is a valued youth agricultural education program, under the direction of the Department of Education. We will defer to the Department of Education for discussion of the FFA program, and of that section of HB 995.

4-H, under the direction of the 4-H Foundation and the Cooperative Extension Service faculty within the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, is one of the oldest programs of non-formal education in Hawai'i. 4-H assists young people age 5-19 in developing life skills and in forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive, and contributing members of society, and touches approximately 35,000 young people annually throughout the State of Hawai'i. The four H's stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. 4-H projects in livestock and crop education are well-known and very successful, 4-H members may also learn about food and nutrition, clothing, health, safety, the environment, and leadership. As a future-looking organization, 4-H's new programs even range from aerospace to theatrics to food safety.

At present, the 4-H program in Hawai'i is in a process of some reorganization. With support from CTAHR, the 4-H Foundation has taken on new responsibilities to address changes in tax code, in addition to their primary function as the funding arm for the 4-H program.

Rather than appropriating funds for the 4-H program to the University of Hawai'i at this particular time, we believe it would be most valuable to amend this section of HB 995 to provide any funding in the form of a grant to the 4-H Foundation, as the funding body for the program.