



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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by
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HB 2193 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and Members of the Committee on Higher Education:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. The University of Hawai'i (UH) opposes HB2193, Relating to the University of Hawaii. This bill subjects to legislative disapproval any tuition fee increase at the University of Hawai'i, and requires UH to submit a resolution for review of and a detailed justification for the increase.

Tuition rate increases already go through a rigorous public notification and communication process, which are subject to the open meeting requirements of Chapter 92, Hawai'i Revised Statutes. Executive Policy 6.202 requires at least one such meeting be held on Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and O'ahu islands. These meetings, and the general public scrutiny regarding UH's tuition rates, already ensures a large amount of public input will be provided to the Board of Regents as it deliberates any tuition rate increases.

Regent Policy 6.202 states that:

"The ultimate intent of this policy is that every qualified Hawai'i citizen shall have an opportunity to pursue postsecondary education within the university system. Since tuition and mandatory fees are critical to access, they shall not be so uniformly high that they prevent qualified citizens from attending a campus of the university. As a general principle, the board subscribes to a tuition policy that seeks to keep costs to resident students at the lowest practical level while maintaining a financial aid program that responds to the needs of students who cannot meet the costs of attendance."

We recognize that tuition increases in recent history have been substantial. However, it may be important to note that tuition at UH as recently as 2011 were very cheap – and even today remain relatively low. Also, general fund appropriations for UH have

declined significantly since 2009, as shown in the table below. In fact, general fund appropriations for FY2016 are still roughly \$33 million, or about 7 percent below FY2009 levels.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>GF Appropriation</u>	<u>% change</u>
2009	\$ 460,482,584	
2010	\$ 422,591,205	-8.23%
2011	\$ 360,687,276	-14.65%
2012	\$ 386,307,258	7.10%
2013	\$ 377,460,254	-2.29%
2014	\$ 386,721,245	2.45%
2015	\$ 409,656,245	5.93%
2016	\$ 427,574,683	4.37%
2017	\$ 428,293,331	0.17%

Although rate tuition increases have been arguably substantial over the last several years, the real dollar amount of tuition still has the UH as an affordable option compared to other public universities. Furthermore, tuition pays for only a portion of the cost to provide an operating university. Subjecting tuition decision to the Legislative process without accommodating commitment from the Legislature to make up the difference in the cost of education will not address the operational needs of education at UH.

Thank you for your time and consideration.