



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

HB 1205

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
and
Senate Committee on Health

February 15, 2005

by

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Statement of

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before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
AND
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH**

February 15, 2005
State Capitol, Conference Room 212, 1:15 p.m.

in consideration of

**HB 1205
RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII**

Chairs Hee and Baker, Vice Chairs Inouye and Chun Oakland and Committee members.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1205. This legislation establishes an emergency medicine grant program at the John A. Burns School of Medical (JABSOM) designed to attract medical students to practice emergency medicine in Hawai'i healthcare facilities. It requires a commitment of seven years of service in emergency room care in Hawai'i following the completion of medical school and residency in exchange for a grant sufficient to fund full tuition. The grant program is to be funded by newly appropriated State funds. The School is obligated to award one or more grants per academic year and is responsible for enforcing the terms and conditions of the grant award.

The School of Medicine is supportive of the intent of the legislation which is to address a shortage in the availability of suitably trained emergency physicians practicing in our State. However, from the School's perspective, there are a number of problems with the bill as it is currently written. First, the bill requires a grantee to "commence an emergency medicine residency program and employment in this State immediately after completion of medical school for a period of seven years..." There is not an emergency medicine training program in the State of Hawai'i at the present time. We have investigated the feasibility of beginning such a training program and discovered that there is ample clinical material to support the development of a training program. However, we have not pursued the establishment of a program given the financial and logistical issues that would be involved. For example, the American Council on Graduate Medical Education, which accredits residency training programs in emergency medicine, mandates that the minimum size of an emergency medicine training program is 18 trainees. The current cost per resident trainee in our existing training programs is

approximately \$70,000 and thus the resident component of the training program alone would require an investment of nearly \$1.3 million. On top of this, additional resources would be required to compensate faculty to train the residents and staff to administer the program. This would add another million dollars in expenses, to bring the total investment for a residency training program in emergency medicine to well over \$2 million.

Second, the bill requires the School of Medicine to administer the emergency medicine grant program and establishes a host of stringent conditions for doing so. This would add a considerable workload to our already overburdened administrative staff. Finally, the funding for the establishment of this grant program is not included in the Board of Regents proposed budget for the University of Hawai'i System. Therefore, general funds over and above that requested by the Board of Regents would need to be appropriated to JABSOM to allow the establishment of this program.

In conclusion, we support the intent of this bill to augment the State's emergency medicine workforce but we believe that practical problems with the bill as it is currently written would make it difficult for the School to respond to this legislative request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.