



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

S.B. 1398 RELATING TO TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS

Testimony Presented Before the Senate Committee on Higher Education
and Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

February 10, 2005

By

Linda Johnsrud
Interim Associate Vice President for Planning and Policy
University of Hawai'i System

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Chair Hee, Chair Hanabusa, and Members of the Committees:

The intent of SB 1398 is to provide scholarships for students studying the Hawaiian Language, and scholarships for Hawaiian-speaking students or students who speak English as a second language for teacher education programs.

An essential goal of the Strategic Plan of the University of Hawai'i is to establish the University as a distinguished resource in Hawaiian and Pacific-Asia affairs, and that commitment depends on perpetuating Hawaiian culture, language, and values. There is existing interest in studying the Hawaiian language as evidenced by the Fall 2003 registrations in Hawaiian Language which were at approximately 700 at UH Mānoa, 300 at UH Hilo, and 750 at the UH Community Colleges. Overall, registrations in Hawaiian/Indo-Pacific Languages increased by 10 percent between 1993 and 2003.

While scholarships for those already interested in studying the Hawaiian language would most certainly be appreciated, a primary emphasis of the University's tuition assistance program is for low income students with established financial need. If the Legislature established a state scholarship program, the monies could be awarded to meet the needs specified by the Legislature. The University encourages the creation of a state scholarship program as an additional avenue for the Legislature to support higher education and to earmark scholarship support for those in need of financial aid without which they could not attend college.

While the University's supports the intent of the bill, we respectfully request that priority be given the Board of Regent-approved biennium budget requests. Thank you for providing the opportunity to testify on SB 1398.