



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

SCR 179
REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO CONDUCT A
FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF THE ADVISABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF
ESTABLISHING A HAWAII STATE UNIVERSITY

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education

March 31, 2005

By

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

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Chair Hee and Members of the Committee:

The University has concerns regarding the separation of a public university from the public higher education system in Hawai'i.

Although there are states that have more than one system of higher education, in a state as small as Hawai'i there is merit in including all ten campuses in one system. We gain economies of scale, we enhance our ability to articulate courses and programs within the system, and we lessen the divisiveness that results when systems compete with one another for scarce resources. The cost of the loss in efficiency and resources outweighs any potential benefit.

Should the committee wish to examine the issues involved in restructuring the system of higher education in the state of Hawai'i, an objective study of the benefits and disadvantages of creating an independent Hawaii State University would be more appropriate. Amending page 2, line 14, to include "benefits of the state system-wide structure" and changing the word "recommended" to "possible" would allow legislators and the public to evaluate the impact of such changes on the interests of the state. Although other states have separately governed universities, most states also have a statewide policy making structure; thus, it would serve the committee to compare the current and proposed structures with other state structures. Also, amending the resolution on page 2, line 28, to remove "including any proposed legislation" would remove the presumption of a predetermined outcome. Such a baseline study of issues would better inform the legislature and public of the resource and policy implications of dismantling our statewide university system.

We respectfully request that the Committee not support SCR 179. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.