



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

---

Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Human Services and Housing  
Thursday, April 16, 2015 at 1:15 pm

by

Vassilis L. Syrmos  
Vice President for Research and Innovation  
University of Hawai'i

WRITTEN ONLY

GM 800 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee, PONO D. SHIM, for a term to expire 6-30-2019.

Chair Chun-Oakland, Vice Chair Green, and members of the committee:

It is with great pleasure that I submit this testimony for Mr. Pono D. Shim in strong support of his recent nomination to the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority Board.

I have had the privilege of working with Mr. Shim for a number of years in my current position as vice president for research and innovation for the University of Hawai'i System. With his insightfulness on a broad range of social issues at home and abroad, I can think of no one more qualified to address the challenges of public housing in Hawai'i.

My office is currently engaged with the local business community on the Hawai'i Innovation Initiative, a bold economic stimulus movement, to help create a diversified economy for the state through the successful commercialization of UH research. I'm fortunate to have a person of Mr. Shim's qualifications and character as the head of Enterprise Honolulu and as a confidant. Though his unique ability to find common ground amongst various groups and issues, he has restored the public's faith in the once-maligned organization and has transformed it into an influential leadership hub for the state – which is critical for the initiative's success.

In 2012, Mr. Shim successfully led the efforts of Punawai 'O Pu'u honua's New Market Tax Credit Application that resulted in a \$40 million allocation for economic development in low-income communities in Hawai'i. His core values are further illustrated by his unselfish donation of time and leadership training to various state departments, including: human services, public safety, human resources, judiciary, and welfare services. Mr. Shim also continues to serve on the directory boards or as an advisor to numerous organizations, including the Economic Development Alliance of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Clean Energy Initiative, Malama Hawai'i Advisory Board, Hawai'i Green Growth Initiative and the Hawai'i Public Charter School Network, to name a few.

It is with strong support that I recommend that Mr. Pono D. Shim be appointed as a board member of the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority.