



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Lower & Higher Education
and
House Committee on Water, Land, & Hawaiian Affairs
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HB 2010 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chairs Woodson and Yamane, Vice Chairs Hashem, Quinlan and Todd, and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2010, which would provide scholarships to students pursuing degrees in Hawaiian language at the University of Hawai'i. The University of Hawai'i System supports the creation of a scholarship fund to increase the number of students who take and learn the Hawaiian language.

While we are supportive, it is not clear from the language of the bill if the intent is to fund a single year of instruction or to fund a scholarship for four years but provide that funding to the University during the 2020-2021 academic year.

The language of the bill raises several other questions regarding its implementation. First, would the scholarship be for students entering the program as declared majors or for any students taking Hawaiian language courses? Second, if students take two years of Hawaiian Language at a Community College and then transfer to UH Hilo or UH Mānoa, are they also eligible for the scholarship? We note that in addition to the two four-year programs at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and the University of Hawai'i Hilo mentioned in the bill, all campuses throughout the system offer Hawaiian Language courses. The Community Colleges offer two years of Hawaiian Language instruction and an AA in Hawaiian Studies. UH West O'ahu offers 4 years of Hawaiian language instruction and a concentration in Hawaiian and Pacific Studies.

We raise these questions to ensure that such a program is adequately administered. While the University is willing to find ways to undertake and overcome any challenges for the benefit of having this program, we would appreciate clarity into how the scholarship program would function.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.