



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Lower and Higher Education
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by

Donald O. Straney, Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy
University of Hawai'i System

HB 2255 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PROMISE PROGRAM

Chair Woodson, Vice Chairs Hashem and Quinlan, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of HB 2255 – Relating to the University of Hawaii Promise Program. Importantly, it would amend Section 304A-506, HRS, to expand the Hawai'i Promise program to provide scholarships for the unmet direct costs needs of qualified students enrolled at any campus of the University of Hawai'i.

Expanding the Hawai'i Promise program to students in 4-year degree programs at the University of Hawai'i, who qualify for federal financial aid, is the highest priority in the Board of Regent's budget request for the university this year. Expanding this program to all university undergraduate programs will significantly enhance the number of economically disadvantaged students who can attend—and graduate from—the state's public university. It will be a significant step forward in expanding access to economic opportunity for Hawai'i's students and preparing the educated workforce the state will need to grow in the coming decades.

Recognizing that tuition is higher at the 4-year campuses, the University of Hawai'i proposes that the Hawai'i Promise program to students in 4-year degree programs at the University of Hawai'i for students with financial need (as determined based on their Free Application for Federal Student Aid) be limited to the cost of tuition and educational fees. It would be awarded only to students to meet remaining tuition and fees need after federal need based aid and their own Estimated Family Contribution. Based on this model, our current estimate is that approximately 5,147 additional students would benefit from the expansion of this program: approximately 2,965 students attending UH Mānoa, 1,085 attending UH Hilo, and 1,097 attending UH West O'ahu.

The program is effective for students in the community colleges, where participation in Hawai'i Promise has led to increase student success in their programs. Many of these successful students will be ready to transfer to a 4-year UH degree program at the completion of this academic year. A 4-year version of Hawai'i Promise will help these students afford the continuation of their education.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.