



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

---

Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Education  
Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 2:45 p.m., Rm 229  
by  
Bonnie Irwin  
Chancellor  
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

### HB 2543 HD1 – RELATING TO ACCESS TO LEARNING

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on section 20 of HB 2543 HD1. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) writes in support of this section and the overall efforts of the legislature to further early learning opportunities for Hawai'i's families. UH Hilo will also cooperate with the larger effort of the various state departments and private early education and childcare entities to move this important initiative forward.

Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani is the only indigenous language college in the country, and is a leader in efforts to revitalize and renormalize Hawaiian as a model for other endangered languages around the world. Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani is the primary source of Hawaiian language medium teachers in the state and operates the only Hawaiian language medium teacher training programs delivered totally through Hawaiian. Among our programs is the state's sole early childhood certification program conducted through Hawaiian. We also work closely with the Hawai'i DOE and charter schools in providing curriculum materials and training for schools taught through Hawaiian.

Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani works hand in hand with 'Aha Pūnana Leo, the state's sole private provider of Hawaiian language medium early education. Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani will have the responsibility for building classrooms for Hawaiian language immersion and establishing pathways for the development of other Hawaiian language immersion classes.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of section 20 of HB 2543 HD1.