



UNIVERSITY  
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SYSTEM

**House Committee on Pandemic & Disaster Preparedness  
Tuesday, February 2, 2021, 9:45 a.m.**

**Testimony by:**

**Kendra Oishi, Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents**

**H.B. No. 503 – RELATING TO BOARD MEETINGS**

Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Eli, and members of the Committee:

The Office of the Board of Regents (Board Office) supports H.B. No. 503 which provides avenues for meaningful engagement in meetings of various boards, including the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i (Board of Regents), through the use of interactive conference technology.

The COVID-19 pandemic has required the implementation of emergency measures suspending certain requirements of the State's Sunshine Law which allowed boards, including the Board of Regents, to conduct official business in a manner that protected public health and safety while maintaining public access to board meetings. In lieu of traditional in-person meetings, remote meetings, also referred to as virtual meetings, have connected people in different physical locations through the use of interactive conference technology and thus enabled and enhanced board and public participation.

On March 19, 2020, the Board of Regents held its first "hybrid" remote meeting, whereby some board members participated in person and some participated remotely, and subsequent meetings, including standing committees, have been conducted remotely via interactive conference technology including audio and video livestreaming. Board of Regents meetings have already incorporated many of the provisions contemplated in H.B. No. 503. While there have been some minor technological issues, conducting Board meetings in this manner has worked well overall and the Board Office has received positive community feedback.

Although the Board attempts to hold meetings across the various campuses of the University System statewide in accordance with statutory intent under Section 304A-104, the Board Office believes that H.B. No. 503 strikes a balance between providing flexibility to boards in conducting business while ensuring public access to these meetings is retained. As such, H.B. No. 503 is worthy of further discussion and consideration and the Board Office supports this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.