



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
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By
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HB 546 HD1 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Matayoshi and members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs:

Aloha e nā alaka'i o ka 'aha'ōlelo o Hawai'i nei,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 546 HD1. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) supports the distinctive provisions of HB 546 HD1 relating to the representation of Hawaiian language medium education on early education. UH Hilo is home to Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani, College of Hawaiian Language, who has been leading efforts to revitalize the Hawaiian language while also serving as a model to national and international indigenous communities who also seek to revive their endangered languages. With support from the Hawai'i State Legislature, UH Hilo/Ka Haka 'Ula has established a complete baccalaureate through to PhD program that offers high quality education to develop capacity for Hawaiian medium education and the further advancement of Hawaiian and indigenous languages writ large.

HB 546 is important legislation that needs to be passed. There is an extreme shortage of qualified individuals for all aspects of education through Hawaiian. This provision allows the state access to important contributions from the small pool of highly qualified individuals in this highly distinctive area of education of our state. Without this legislation, there is a danger that the state early education advisory board could have individuals without the necessary expertise to represent the interests of one of the most vulnerable populations in our schools – those attending schooling through Hawaiian in accordance with US policy expressed in the Native American Languages Act of 1990.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to submit testimony and support this bill.