



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, April 1, 2021, at 9:30 a.m.

by
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HB 1291 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO SCHOLARSHIPS

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of House Bill 1291, House Draft 1 Senate Draft 1 (HB 1291 HD1 SD1). The bill encourages students who previously received special education services to pursue postsecondary education and training by providing access to scholarships at the University of Hawai'i.

The UH encourages all of Hawai'i's residents, including students with disabilities, to pursue education and training beyond high school. Financial assistance is available for students who have disabilities and who enroll in one of the UH's ten campuses. Students who have disabilities have access to need and merit-based scholarships at UH.

HB 1291 HD1 SD1 calls UH to award scholarships to high achieving students who have graduated from a public high school in the State and received special education services for three or more years during their enrollment in grades seven through twelve.

The Hawai'i State Scholars program was established in 2005. As described in HRS 304A-504, the program establishes scholarships for recent Hawai'i high school graduates who are high achieving: valedictorians, 4.0 grade point average or high college admissions test scores. If the legislature elects to make high achieving students who received special education services eligible for this scholarship, we recommend that the criteria be amended, as follows, to facilitate efficient administration to award scholarships to eligible students:

(D) Earned a high school diploma from a public high school in the State with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 as determined for admission to the university if the student provides evidence that they qualified for and received special education services for two or more years during enrollment in grades *nine* through twelve;

Please note that this scholarship is awarded when funds are available. Funds are not currently appropriated for this scholarship.

Also, UH Foundation scholarships, established by donors, specifically support students with disabilities:

- Walter Serikawa Memorial Scholarships for part-time students attending any UH Community College who have a disability and for UH Mānoa students, graduate or undergraduate, who are legally blind and/or deaf or hard of hearing,
- Kal Warrington Silvert Scholarships for UH Mānoa undergraduate students who are wheelchair users because of a permanent disability, and
- Masao and Michiko Okasako Scholarships for UH Mānoa undergraduate students and for UH Maui College students who have a documented disability.

UH welcomes the opportunity to support additional scholarships to increase financial support available to students with disabilities, provided that the Legislature funds the additional scholarships.