



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Judiciary
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By

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HCR 112 – DECLARING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **support** of HCR 112. This resolution declares racism as a public health crisis, and recognizes the importance of educational opportunities, training and continued learning aimed at understanding and addressing systemic racism. The Governor is also urged to address racism in all state departments in an effort to promote racial equality.

The John A. Burns School of Medicine has been committed to helping the State address social inequities in order to deal with health disparities in Hawai'i. We have long recognized the issues faced by native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) groups in accessing health care as well as the problems that stem from the lack of proper medical treatment. Racism is a threat to public health and safety, and is a social determinant of health, shaping access to the resources that create opportunities for health, including public safety, housing, education, and employment, and is a persistent barrier to health equity for all of Hawai'i. The COVID-19 pandemic brought these disparities into greater focus when it was found that the highest rates of positive cases in Hawai'i were among native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander groups. Addressing systemic racism at the departmental level is an important step toward creating social equality throughout the State.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.