



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
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By
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HB 2491 HD2 SD1 – RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 2491 HD2 SD1. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) supports HB 2491 HD2 SD1 that proposes to establish a standard for the spelling and punctuation of Hawaiian names and words as they appear in official State and County letterheads, and seeks to provide equal support and standing for both native speakers and second language speakers of Hawaiian language.

UH Hilo is home to Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani, College of Hawaiian Language, that 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. The college has translation expertise among faculty, M.A. and Ph.D students and the Hale Kuamo'o Hawaiian Language Center at UH Hilo. Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani has also established minimum qualifications (MQs) for demonstrated Hawaiian language proficiency of faculty and staff positions of the college. Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani has the expertise in identifying traditional dialects of Hawaiian existing before language shift to English throughout the state, including Ni'ihau.

UH Hilo supports this bill and through our Hale Kuamo'o and other resources at Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani we are willing to provide support and expertise to the State in carrying out the requirements of this bill. We see that the responsibilities as requiring additional funding, as like the increased attention to the Hawaiian language college and its partner 'Imiloa mandated in Act 46, SLH 2020, it calls for increased support for the larger state use of Hawaiian beyond university language courses.

We see the bill as an important step towards strengthening the vitality of Hawaiian through increasing government documents, functions, services and a growing workforce community of Hawaiian speakers as a critical effort to ensure the revitalization of the Hawaiian language for generations to come.

Mahalo for allowing UH Hilo to testify on this issue.