



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
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By

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HB 2684 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on HB 2684. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) supports passage of HB 2684 which seeks to establish the Institute of Indigenous Education, Science, and Outreach (Institute) to be placed within UH Hilo through a collaboration between the UH Hilo 'Imiloa Astronomy Center ('Imiloa) and the UH Hilo college of Hawaiian language, Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani (CoHL).

The legislature established the CoHL under HRS §§ 304A-1301-1302 in 1997, the functions of which include providing a quality education primarily through the medium of the Hawaiian language, as well as the incorporation of Nāwahīōkalani'ōpu'u School and other laboratory schools, that now includes three other K-12 charter schools as well as all the 'Aha Pūnana Leo's ('APL) 13 Hawaiian Medium preschools throughout the state.

CoHL faculty and administrators worked alongside community members and agencies to help establish 'Imiloa as an extension of its work to advance the Hawaiian language. 'Imiloa opened its doors in 2006 and is the only bi-lingual science Center in Hawai'i and has become a national and international model for indigenous informal science education serving its community through local science research, cultural advancement, and environmental stewardship. 'Imiloa has become a critical gathering place for practitioners and scholars, fostering collaborative efforts that are advancing science education from an indigenous foundation and perspective.

The Institute established by HB 2684 will further solidify the relationship between 'Imiloa and the CoHL, along with its laboratory schools and community partners. The streamlining of operations as well as the flexibility of scheduling, outreach and functionality will further the impact of these units. UH Hilo has found that both 'Imiloa and the College face many unique situations that require agility to address the State's Hawaiian language needs. Among such things are scheduling courses outside the standard university semesters to provide curriculum and instruction to PreK-12 institutions, teaching at the College's laboratory school program in areas where there are gaps in instruction, utilizing upper division college students to teach lower

division/dual credit courses in beginning Hawaiian for English medium high school students, and being able to provide outreach to learners with distinctive ties to the State as well as institutions, organizations and agencies looking for support with furthering the learning, use and normalization of the Hawaiian language.

UH Hilo is proud of the work that 'Imiloa and the CoHL have already accomplished, including the recent designation of the CoHL as the National Native American Language Resource Center, funded by a five-year grant from the US Department of Education. This Institute will provide UH Hilo the ability not only to better serve the Hawaiian language needs of the State but to further our impact as a model for indigenous language revitalization and normalization.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill.