



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education and Technology  
Wednesday, February 14, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.

By

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University of Hawai'i System

#### HB 2720 HD1 – RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on HB 2720 HD1, which establishes a collective bargaining unit for graduate assistants employed by the University of Hawai'i and community college system.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) has had ongoing discussions with the Graduate Student Organization (the UH Mānoa leadership entity for graduate students) elected representatives regarding this issue, and UH is deliberately not taking a position on this measure.

UH recognizes that the development and creation of a bargaining unit falls under the purview of the Legislature, and Hawai'i Revised Statutes §89-6 will need to be amended to explicitly identify which bargaining unit graduate assistants would be situated – whether an existing unit or a newly created one. HB 2720 contemplates a new unit specifically for graduate assistants. As one of the governmental employers of the State of Hawai'i, and the only government employer to have graduate assistants, UH believes this bill will help the graduate assistants identify their statutorily authorized unit, and it would help the State identify who is the legal representative of graduate assistants should they eventually establish a union.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this measure.