



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
Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

By

Della Teraoka, Interim Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

HB 617 – RELATING TO NURSING

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of HB 617 which appropriates funds to establish the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program at the University of Hawai'i - Maui College.

The UH recognizes the existing workforce shortages in health care and the high demand for nurses in the state. Additionally, the [UH Regents Policy 4.207](#) Community College System acknowledges the need for the neighbor island community colleges to continue to provide a comprehensive set of courses and programs to make the university accessible to every Hawai'i resident who wants and can benefit from the opportunities and experiences provided by the community colleges. The UH is also cognizant of the importance of using our budget resources wisely and being careful not to duplicate existing programs.

HB 617 indicates “[t]he legislature believes that offering a bachelor of science in nursing program at the university of Hawaii Maui college can help to increase the supply of nurse graduates, reduce the nursing workforce shortage, and allow Maui nursing students to remain on Maui during their entire course of study.” The UH concurs with the legislature that the lack of a BSN program in the county of Maui is a matter of statewide concern and will begin an assessment to ensure there is no duplication of programs and an effective use of resources while initiating the new academic program proposal process for the BSN. The funding from HB 617 would support students taking the new BSN prerequisites in preparation for the program curriculum and provide for additional faculty lecturers.

While UH supports the intent of HB 617, we respectfully suggest that should an appropriation be provided, it be included within the general appropriations act. We believe this approach, rather than through a special appropriation, would integrate the necessary funding into the base budget, ensuring greater fiscal stability and predictability for the program's long-term implementation and sustainability. Integrating the funding in this manner would also facilitate better long-range planning and resource allocation.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 617, on the condition its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 617.