



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Health
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By

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SB 2751 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) supports the concept outlined in SB 2751 of creating more opportunities for bringing health care providers to underserved areas of Hawai'i. The Educational Loan Repayment Program is a proven method of addressing Hawaii's health care shortage by supporting recruitment and retention of providers for medically underserved areas.

We are concerned regarding the impact which a second loan repayment program would have on the State Loan Repayment Program administered by JABSOM and the matching funds it receives from the State. Another bill (SB2597) introduced this session, requests state funds to match the federal grant money received through JABSOM's loan repayment program. The program administered by JABSOM covers many health care providers, including psychologists and social workers.

JABSOM has successfully administered the Hawai'i State Loan Repayment program since 2012. The program is underwritten by a federal grant through the National Health Service Corps which matches, dollar-for-dollar, the state funds JABSOM receives from the state. In the past several years, we have engaged in partnership with the Department of Health, enabling JABSOM to continue the loan repayment program on behalf of Hawai'i. To date, the program has supported 64 health care providers in exchange for work commitments in medically underserved areas. We now have 25 active providers receiving loan repayment and an additional 7 on the waiting list. Of the 36 loan recipients who have completed the program, 21 remain at the sites where they served their work commitments and 26 have stayed in Hawai'i.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.