



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 Finance
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By

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SB 1151 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROMISE PROGRAM

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 1151 SD2 HD1, which ensures access to Hawai'i Promise program funding by exempting certificate program students from the requirement to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each academic year to be considered eligible for the Hawai'i Promise program.

The Hawai'i Promise program has demonstrated its value and benefit to students pursuing degree programs at the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges (UHCC). For students who are interested in pursuing a certificate program, the requirement of completing the FAFSA to be considered eligible for the Hawai'i Promise scholarship may be a barrier to some students, including students with developmental disabilities. Exempting students pursuing a certificate program from completing the FAFSA each academic year can ensure access to those students pursuing their educational goals with a shorter certificate program. Hawai'i Promise is an important tool directly benefiting Hawai'i's families otherwise least able to afford higher education.

The UHCC is committed to creating an application form for students exempted from completing the FAFSA and using the Hawai'i Promise scholarship to cover full direct costs as there would be no ability to determine "unmet need" without the completed FAFSA. Being exempt from completing the FAFSA also means that certificate students will not be eligible to receive federal financial aid and the full direct cost will be borne by Hawai'i Promise.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 1151 SD2 HD1, 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 SB 1151 SD2 HD1.