_____

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, February 28, 2025 at 10:05 a.m.
By
Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa
And
Maenette Benham, EdD, Chancellor
University of Hawaiʻi – West Oʻahu

SB 1502 SD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1502 SD1. This bill seeks to establish faculty positions, student programs, and facilities within the College of Social Sciences at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa and the University of Hawaiʻi – West Oʻahu. Its goal is to develop a skilled workforce for the defense sector of the state's economy.

<u>University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa</u>

Since 2023, the College of Social Sciences (CSS) at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa (UH Mānoa) has developed and delivered programs to prepare high school and university students for careers in intelligence analysis, national security and cybersecurity. Now, in 2025, CSS and other UH Mānoa units are ready to broaden the scope of these pilot projects by establishing a UH Mānoa-based academic program, Intelligence Studies in the Asia Pacific (ISAP).

ISAP would change the historical practice of transferring personnel from the continent and foreign countries and moving them to Hawaiʻi to fill local jobs in national security. This workforce development project would enable the people of Hawaiʻi, who have a strong affinity for Pacific Islander and Asian cultures and languages, to take the lead in monitoring and addressing regional international affairs and security issues within their home state.

With the goal of preparing Hawaiʻi's people for local high-paying careers in national security fields, CSS will continue to work closely with UH Mānoa units such as Engineering and the College of Arts, Languages and Letters, as well as the University of Hawaiʻi – West Oʻahu's (UH West Oʻahu) cybersecurity research laboratory and other campuses within the UH System. This workforce initiative would attract and serve

students who are pursuing a variety of majors, and provide credentials for working professionals to upgrade skills in a rapidly growing Hawaiʻi industry.

<u>University of Hawaiʻi – West Oʻahu</u>

The Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity provides students with an advanced cybersecurity education in information security, mathematics, computer science, and computer engineering. This technical cybersecurity degree program prepares students to meet the advanced cybersecurity workforce requirements of public sector agencies and private sector enterprises. This degree program supports both four-year students at UH West Oʻahu and pathway students from aligned Associate Degree programs from the University of Hawaiʻi Community Colleges.

In partnership with the College of Social Sciences (CSS) at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa academic program, Intelligence Studies in the Asia Pacific (ISAP), our collective goal is to prepare Hawaiʻi's people for local high-paying careers in national security fields. UH West Oʻahu's Cyber Security Coordination Center (CSCC) provides students with unique opportunity to develop subject matter expertise and identification of best practices for network defense, vulnerability research, forensic analysis, and industrial control systems. The Cyber Security Research Laboratory (CSRL) provides students with unique internship opportunities to combine cyber security education and skills to promote advanced knowledge in an applied research environment. Students participate in faculty guided applied analysis and research related to the understanding and improvement of security and resiliency for critical information infrastructures and systems at the local, regional, and national level. The CSCC and CSRL provide a collaborative resource for Cybersecurity, Information Security and Assurance, and Information Technology degree students that will also produce highly trained cybersecurity and information technology professionals to meet increasing technical workforce requirements that exists in our communities.

The funding allocated in this bill will support the following initiatives:
1. The establishment of a multidisciplinary Integrated Security and Privacy (ISAP) program at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa, utilizing 4.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees, including 3 faculty members, with an estimated budget of $500,000.
2. The creation of a 0.5 FTE position for the Director of the Cyber Security Coordination Center and a 0.5 FTE position for the Director of the Cyber Security Research Laboratory at the University of Hawaiʻi, West Oʻahu. This funding will also cover expenses related to student internships, certifications, equipment, software, and professional certification fees.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our testimony in support and respectfully ask for your favorable consideration, provided its adoption does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.