



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Economic Development & Business
February 3, 2017 at 9:15 a.m.

by
Vassilis L. Syrmos, Vice President for Research and Innovation
University of Hawai'i System

HB 598 Proposed HD1 – RELATING TO CYBERSECURITY

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

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports HB 598 Proposed HD1 to establish a Cyber Hawai'i Pilot Project to plan, develop and implement a “cyber-ecosystem” to coordinate and support cyber activities related to readiness and resilience, education and workforce development, economic development and innovation.

Cyber threats are among the gravest national security dangers to the United States – as citizens and those in the private sector and government are increasingly confronted by a range of actors attempting to do harm through identity theft, cyber-enabled economic espionage, politically motivated cyberattacks and other malicious activity.

It is also one of the most strategic threats that federal, state and private sector industries face in Hawai'i. Operation-critical systems in every sector have a dependency on cyber, which expands capacity and range of capability -- but also introduces new and evolving forms of vulnerabilities that threaten the security infrastructure.

The University of Hawai'i is well-engaged in numerous cybersecurity research, education and workforce development initiatives, including the establishment of NSA-designated Centers of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense & Research at UH Mānoa, Honolulu Community College and at UH West O'ahu; conducting annual joint cybersecurity exercises involving the Hawai'i National Guard, U.S. Coast Guard and a number of business, industry and government organizations; and annually hosting the GenCyber Camps that encourage STEM pathways in cybersecurity to middle and high school students.

Through its active engagements and partnerships with U.S. Pacific Command, NSA Hawai'i, Military Affairs Council, CIO Council of Hawai'i and other influential organizations, UH's is in perfect position to serve as the “quarterback” to coordinate and articulate a statewide “cyber-ecosystem” that will be able to share real-time threat intelligence with a trusted, vetted community and grow a skilled cybersecurity workforce here in the state of Hawai'i.

The University of Hawai'i would like to request that the Legislature pass this measure and appropriate \$250,000 to fund the project. To further demonstrate its commitment to this important initiative, UH pledges a 1-1 match of the appropriation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.