



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Judiciary
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by

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HB 847 HD1 – RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII RESEARCH

Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports this bill which would provide UH express statutory authority to encourage, promote, financially support and directly participate in the commercialization of UH-generated intellectual property.

In the past, UH secured patents on its inventions and licensed the patents to private companies willing to risk commercialization. After observing how UH's mainland public university counterparts promote innovation and research, it is clear that the University of Hawai'i needs to be more active in its support and more focused in its efforts to commercialize its research products. These efforts, in turn, will contribute to a dynamic and more diverse workforce in the state and promote economic health.

If a clear legal framework authorizing UH to participate directly and indirectly in new commercial enterprises were established, UH could more efficiently contribute to the Hawai'i Innovation Initiative's goal to diversify the state's economy. This express legal authority would reduce the uncertainty in creating, financing, and operating new ventures affiliated with UH, and could thereby induce greater private sector participation in promising concepts.

The University of Hawai'i's brand will also be enhanced. Currently, UH lags its peer institutions in having the support infrastructure to encourage and nurture technology transfer. To keep UH competitive with its mainland peers in the competition for external commercial research sponsorship and in the completion for hiring entrepreneurial faculty or staff, we need to develop a capacity to commercialize its intellectual property.

The House Committee on Higher Education passed this measure with technical, nonsubstantive amendments for consistency, clarity, and style. The Committee on Higher Education also retained the original language regarding the application of the State Ethics Code to such activity. The University of Hawai'i agrees that it will provide greater clarity and certainty if the section called "Construction of subpart" beginning at line 18, page 12 and ending on line 2, page 13, were retained in this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.