



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
February 22, 2017 at 2:00 p.m.

By
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HB 1594 HD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PROMISE PROGRAM

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to **testify in support of HB 1594 HD1**. This measure would establish a new scholarship program called Hawai'i's Promise that provides support for students with financial need, as defined by the U.S. Department of Education, to attend any campus of the University of Hawai'i system.

Hawai'i's Promise would be a "last dollar" scholarship. Other sources of financial aid such as federal Pell grants, UH opportunity scholarships, and other public and privately sponsored scholarships would be applied first, and then Hawai'i's Promise would support unmet needs for tuition, fees, books, supplies and transportation. This measure would allow any Hawai'i resident who meets the eligibility criteria to attend a UH campus, at no direct cost beyond the Estimated Family Contribution. We are confident that this measure will encourage more students to attend a UH campus and will advance the State's 55 by 25 goal -- that 55% of the Hawai'i's working age population should hold a post-secondary degree by 2025.

There are some provisions of this version of the bill that the University would prefer to amend, such as the repayment provision on page 6 of HB 1594 HD1. As currently drafted, this language would be considered a loan rather than a scholarship and would require all students to sign a written agreement understanding the payback provisions of such a loan. If the Committee is willing, we would be pleased to provide alternative language to clarify this section.

The University of Hawai'i is very grateful for the warm reception received by this bill and **fully supports** its passage.