



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
March 14, 2017 at 1:15 p.m.

By  
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University of Hawai'i System

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

Chair Kahele, Vice Chair Kidani 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.

The University of Hawai'i appreciates all the support that the Hawai'i Promise Program is receiving and looks forward to working with the Legislature in fine-tuning the language of this bill as it continues thru the process. However, as currently drafted the program would only be available to full-time students. Additionally, the University wanted to point out that as currently drafted, the language for the repayment provision on page 6 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 before receiving any funding. In addition, the University would like to request that the GPA requirements be consistent with federal guidelines for students to receive a Pell Grant. Without this alignment of requirements, a student could be placed in a position where they were in good standing with the Federal and other University programs but out of compliance with the Hawai'i Promise scholarship. The student would be placed in the position of having to use his or her need based financial aid to pay back the State rather than having it applied to the cost of attendance. Finally, the program as currently drafted would only be available to full-time students. This would exclude significant numbers of students, especially in the community colleges.

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