



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
April 4, 2017 at 9:35 p.m.

by
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HB 1594 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PROMISE PROGRAM

Chair Tokuda, Vice Dela Cruz and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to **testify in support of HB 1594 HD1 SD1**. 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. The University wanted to point out that as currently drafted, the language for the repayment provision on pages 6-7 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.

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