



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
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By  
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### HCR 89 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM TO CONVENE BASIC ECONOMIC SECURITY WORKING GROUP

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Concurrent Resolution 89. This measure includes the executive director of the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO) as a member of a Basic Economic Security Working Group within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism to address the potential for significant economic disruption and ensure the economic sustainability of Hawaii's individuals and families in light of future automation, innovation, and disruption.

UHERO is housed within the Social Science Research Institute of the College of Social Sciences. The mission of UHERO is to inform public and private sector decision-making through rigorous, independent economic research on the people, environment, and economies of Hawai'i and the Asia-Pacific region. This mission aligns with the working group's charge to:

- (1) Assess Hawaii's job market exposure to automation technologies, globalization, and disruptive innovation;
- (2) Assess Hawaii's existing spending on social safety net programs and other relevant expenditures, as well as expected spending on those programs in light of anticipated automation technologies, globalization, disruptive innovation, and job losses;
- (3) Identify and analyze options to ensure economic security, including a partial universal basic income, full universal basic income, and other mechanisms;
- (4) Monitor studies, trials, and efforts in Hawaii and other jurisdictions relevant to the basic economic security working group; and
- (5) Seek out partnerships to publish or fund relevant trials or studies to evaluate options;

The College and UHERO support study and research into the future economic health and stability of Hawai'i and are willing to participate in the working group, but not without faculty resources to do so. UHERO's (3.5 FTE) faculty have very full research agendas,

and already voluntarily serve on state committees and commissions. For example, UHERO's director Carl Bonham has served on the State Council on Revenues for almost two decades, and Dr. Kimberly Burnett serves as the UH representative on the state Endangered Species Recovery Committee. These are just a few examples of UHERO faculty contributing their expertise to address issues of critical importance to the state. Given UHERO's extremely limited faculty resources, adding another important working group assignment will negatively impact other areas of research and service that are vital to the state.