HB 573 – RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Gates, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 573. This bill would allow the University of Hawai‘i to waive tuition, in full or in part, for the children or spouses of deceased veterans who are eligible for gold star status. The bill would require the gold star family member to provide proof of their status.

HB 573 has a laudable goal. The University, however, does not grant full tuition waivers. We do waive the nonresident portion of tuition in some cases, generally paid for with funds allocated or donated to cover the waiver. The US Department of Veterans Affairs has educational assistance programs for gold star family members. We are aware that recently, the VA has changed its policy regarding some of these benefits. We are examining the extent of the impact of these changes on current or potential students who are gold star family members.

For this reason, the University of Hawai‘i would respectfully request HB 573 be deferred until the policy changes by the VA are better understood and the impact on college students in Hawai‘i can be evaluated.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.