



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Judiciary
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by

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SB 137 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII RESEARCH

Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports this measure.

This bill provides UH with clear statutory authority to frame and support its various activities to develop and commercialize the intellectual property created by its faculty, staff or alumni. Successful commercialization, in turn, will diversify the workforce in the state, will promote a robust and dynamic innovation sector of our economy, will provide better-performing products or services to the consumers and general public, and will create potential economic returns to UH.

The University of Hawai'i's brand as a research and teaching institution will be enhanced. Currently, UH lags its peer institutions in having the support infrastructure to encourage and nurture technology transfer. To keep UH competitive with its mainland peers in attracting external research sponsorship and in hiring entrepreneurial faculty or staff, the UH must develop its commercialization capacity.

Clear statutory authority is an essential component to develop UH's capacity to commercialize its intellectual property.

Last week, the House Committee on Higher Education amended this measure by making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for consistency, clarity and style. (HSCR 1094). Concerns have been expressed by Common Cause Hawai'i and the Society of Professional Journalists on the provision of this measure allowing the UH Board of Regents to meet in executive session to discuss confidential trade secrets or proprietary business information. In response, UH refers this Committee to -- and agrees with -- the Office of Information Practice's analysis that "the provision of this bill affecting the Sunshine Law and the UIPA [is] reasonably limited to achieve its intended purpose of protecting proprietary information without unduly restricting public access to the formation of public policy." (See Testimony on SB No. 137, SD2, submitted by Office of Information Practices, dated March 14, 2017).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.