



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
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By
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SB 298 – RELATING TO SCHOOLS

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 298. This bill proposes to establish “a workforce readiness program within the department of education to allow students to graduate from an extended high school enrollment with a high school diploma and an industry-recognized associate's degree.” This bill asks for a formal and intentional connection between DOE pathways, UH programs and industry partners, and this bill further asks that this workforce readiness program resides within the department of education.

As a result of preparing for a recent DOE grant opportunity around career readiness, there exists a working committee involving the head of the State CTE department, UH and DOE leaders that is still going forward. In addition, the UHCC System Office has developed a sector/labor mapping site that is used as a means to engage the leadership of all major economic sectors in the state of Hawai'i, in a formal, cyclic, and intentional fashion. The University of Hawai'i's new website organizes all the jobs in the state of Hawai'i into sector grouping. Each job in the state has its own landing page and detailed there are the following: current demand, projected demand, salary ranges, degree levels required by industry, skill sets required (soft and hard), and a listing of companies that are hiring. In addition, the web site shows how DOE pathways lead to programs in the University of Hawai'i and then into industry.

The leadership of the banking sector and the chief information officers from all major sectors have already met with UH and the DOE and as a result have established formal relations and specific projects and programs have evolved from this engagement. These sector convenings also include the DOE and as a result there is ongoing work to connect the program pathways in the DOE with UH Associate programs and also direct connection with industry partners. In sum, much of current activity in the DOE and in UHCC system is dedicated to connection the curriculum directly with workforce opportunities.

The University of Hawai'i Community College supports the intent of this bill and would add that most of what is asked for is already taking place. We defer to the DOE on the legal and technical considerations on this matter.

Thank you for considering this testimony in your deliberations.