



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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and
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SB 826 SD1 – RELATING TO THE PUNA DISTANCE LEARNING CENTER

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

Both the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and the University of Hawai'i Community College System support SB 826 SD1 with suggested revisions to fund a distance learning center in the District of Puna.

There is a critical need to strengthen rural outreach, education and economic development in Puna which is one of the most underserved areas in the state and also the fastest growing district on Hawai'i Island. It would be most feasible and beneficial for the residents of Puna for the Center to be under Hawai'i Community College, with UH Hilo collaborating and partnering to provide higher education and career options to the people of Hawai'i Island.

We would request that the bill be amended to identify Hawai'i Community College as the lead unit, as we are trying to move Hawai'i Community College into being a distributed campus: Hilo, Palamanui, North Hawai'i Education and Research Center and potentially, Puna. Hawai'i Community College is best suited to manage and deliver programs from UH Hilo, Hawai'i CC and other UH campuses as needed.

We support SB 826 SD1 with the above revisions on the condition that any requested funds do not supplant any portion of the University's Biennium Budget request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 826 SD1. Aloha.