



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education
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By

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SB 1188 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kahele, and members of the committee:

Senate Bill 1188 establishes a STEM educator scholarship to be administered by the Hawai'i Department of Education to address the shortage of STEM teachers in secondary schools in Hawai'i, and appropriates funds for the program.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of SB 1188 and recognizes that any scholarship funding support geared toward STEM teacher education would greatly help in addressing the shortage of qualified teachers in this area. Increasing the number of qualified STEM teachers in Hawai'i would also have a multiplying effect once additional STEM teachers are in the classrooms by providing more students with access to science, technology, engineering and math concepts.

In order for this program to have the largest impact possible, UH respectfully recommends that awarding criteria be broadly defined so that they include returning adult students, current workers who want to change their careers to teaching, and other students who are seeking licensure in STEM education areas but may not follow a traditional student's academic pathway. These may include students who previously earned a bachelor's degree and are returning to the University to pursue a course of study leading to teacher licensure. In addition, we recommend that financial need not be the primary criterion used for selection, since some students have less need on paper but in reality are just as financially disadvantaged as a federal grant recipient. Thus, we advocate that eligibility not be limited only to Pell-eligibility, or other narrowly-defined need-based awarding criteria that may exclude groups of students who are potential teachers.

The University of Hawai'i appreciates the legislature's strong support in addressing the STEM teacher shortage in our state's secondary schools. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1188.