HB 972
Making An Appropriation for the University of Hawaii

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education

February 3, 2005

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Interim Director, College of Social Sciences Public Policy Center
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HB 972 Relating to Making An Appropriation For The University of Hawaii

Chair Tommy Waters and Members of the Committee:

I am Susan Chandler, Interim Director of the College of Social Sciences Public Policy Center at the University of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 972, which would appropriate funds for the University of Hawaii legislative internship program to raise stipends for student participants to $3,000, including retroactive payment to interns participating in the 2005 Legislative Session.

The College of Social Sciences currently has two legislative interns through the Public Policy Center supported by private funds. They receive stipends of $2,000 plus $750 for expenses such as transportation and parking at the Capitol, and they also receive three academic credits. While we appreciate the intent of this bill to increase stipend amounts and appropriate funds therefore, the current stipend amount is adequate to attract students who participate in the program for the educational benefit rather than the rate of pay. It would thus be far better to maintain the stipend amount, which will enable the College to continue the program.

While legislative internships are an excellent educational experience, the University with its limited funds, offers this program as funding allows. Therefore, the University supports the intent of HB 972 so long as it does not replace or adversely impact priorities of the University’s Executive Biennium Budget.