

# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



## HB 2444 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education and  
House Committee on Education

January 29, 2008 at 2:40pm

by  
Virginia S. Hinshaw  
Chancellor  
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

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**HB 2444: Making an Appropriation for the University of Hawai'i**

Chairs Chang and Takumi, Vice Chairs Bertram and Berg, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for this opportunity. The University cannot support this bill because of our pressing priorities, such as R&M and health and safety issues, which are critical to our ability to perform our core mission.

We appreciate that this might be an important priority for the state, so we wanted to provide the following information to assist you in your decision-making.

HB 2444 describes the intended functions of the Office of School Redesign (OSR), which is currently housed in the College of Education. Initiated in 2003 as a joint effort of the College of Education and the DOE, OSR has been funded through June 2008 by the DOE through a Memorandum of Agreement with the UH as an office outside the Department of Education that serves as a catalyst for rethinking how high schools can be organized and operated to instill relationships, relevance, and rigor.

Hawai'i's high schools average among the nation's second largest. As Dr. Mary Anne Raywid has documented, the evidence is now extensive that small schools have major benefits over large ones, including: higher attendance and graduation rates; higher levels of academic achievement; fewer students dropping out; a stronger sense of connectedness on the part of students and higher levels of participation in extracurricular activities; greater parent involvement; and better student behavior and fewer disciplinary incidents. Further, students from minority and low-income families are particularly handicapped by large schools and benefitted by small ones.

With meager funding of about \$75,000 per year, the OSR initiated and supported school efforts to redesign our very large high schools into smaller learning communities. Working with 12 schools, OSR has convened regularly scheduled Professional Learning Teams of school administrators to collaborate on school redesign and best practices; in collaboration with administrators statewide OSR completed a Principals' Compact establishing goals and agreed upon principles for school redesign; and OSR convened statewide student conferences resulting in the High School Student Compact describing what the primary stakeholders, students, want their schools to become.

With the changes in funding allocations within the DOE to weighted student formula, the funding stream for OSR is in jeopardy, as the DOE will no longer have discretionary funds at the state level to maintain such efforts. The College of Education does not have the funds to support OSR. Funding support would provide stability for OSR, further the partnership with the DOE, and provide external resources and support at a time when our public schools are struggling to reinvent themselves.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.