



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

BOARD OF REGENTS

Testimony presented before the
House Committee on Finance
February 21, 2014 at 12:00 p.m.

by
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Chair, Board of Regents

HB 1070 HD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Luke, Vice Chairs Nishimoto and Johanson, and members of the House Committee on Finance:

The Board of Regents (BOR) of the University of Hawai'i submits this testimony in opposition to HB 1070. This bill is similar to HB 1072 in that it singles out the members of the BOR, relying on a senate report that is nearly two years old and addressed the circumstances of the concert fiasco of 2012. It assumes no change has taken place since that time, and that regents will inform themselves about Hawaii's Sunshine open records law only under the threat of removal from the BOR. The bill does not apply to any other volunteer state board or commission, nor to any state board or commission whose members are compensated.

The BOR took the recommendations of the senate special committee to heart and changed procedures and practices to ensure compliance with the letter and spirit of Hawaii's Sunshine and open records law. Executive sessions are held only in instances where disclosure would compromise the University's position in negotiations or litigation, or to protect the privacy of others, as required by law. Every new Regent receives a special orientation on all of his or her obligations, with a specific emphasis on Hawaii's Sunshine and open records law by the Office of General Counsel and the University's EEO officer. In its By-Laws, the Board has required itself to conduct a self-study of its stewardship every two years, with very prescriptive planning requirements, including setting a workshop date and site at least three months in advance, for at least an eight hour session.

Volunteer public service as a regent is a significant contribution to our community. Such service is vital to the operations of state government and ultimately the success of Hawai'i and its people. This bill would impose an unequal burden on the BOR and is based on circumstances that no longer exist.

We respectfully request this measure be deferred.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.