UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Education

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By

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SB 1147, SD 1: Relating to Teaching Licensure

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i opposes SB 1147, SD 1 which transfers the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board's authority to issue teaching licenses to the Department of Education and a committee it selects.

The State of Hawai'i's 18th Legislature enacted Act 240, which required a license to teach and transferred the authority for setting public school teacher licensing standards from the Department of Education (DOE) to the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board (HTSB), an independent governing body like those that exist for other professions. Since July 1, 2002, the HTSB has been responsible for teacher licensing. We believe that the Legislature appropriately placed the authority for teacher licensing with the HTSB.

SB 1147, SD 1 undermines the progress made to date in establishing an independently functioning teacher standards board. As presented, it contradicts existing law and places the Department of Education in direct conflict with the HTSB.

The HTSB is currently changing its licensing requirements. These changes once approved will, in large part, benefit out-of-state applicants and make the arguments in Section 1 moot.

We recommend approving SB 100, which allows the HTSB to decide when a suspension of its rules is in order due to extenuating circumstances so that the Legislature need not form another committee to duplicate the work of the Board. Under its proposed rule changes, the HTSB can address the concerns and opportunities stated in this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

c: SB1147, SD1_03-16-07_EDN