



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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

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by

Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor

and

Peter Crouch, Dean

College of Engineering

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 1096 SD 2 RELATING TO TECHNOLOGY WORKFORCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Chair Chang, Chair Takumi, and committee members:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1096, SD 2 to appropriate funds for science-, technology-, engineering- and math-related programs. We recognize and respect the importance of these programs to ensuring the success of Hawai'i's students in the global economy by offering support for innovative educational programs in fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and to prepare students for further education and employment.

While we strongly support these programs, the current and projected budget reductions for the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa require us to make difficult choices, just as the Hawaii Legislature has to do. While many programs, especially those in SB 1096, are definitely worthy, not all can be funded, and we must base our decisions on the basis of campus priorities – the highest of which continues to be our tremendous need in the area of repairs and maintenance. This is defined in the Board of Regents' approved budget and reflects the critical importance of repairs and maintenance to our ability to perform our core mission for the State of Hawai'i. Therefore, while we both have been very supportive and involved with these efforts, we can currently only support the concept proposed in this bill at this time.

We definitely appreciate and share the interest expressed in this legislation for supporting students' interest in pursuing math/science and technology careers. In addition to existing College of Engineering programs that provide support in these areas, UH Mānoa's Stan Sheriff Center is proud to host the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) robotics teams' regional tournament. We agreed to host the 38-team competition at no charge in 2008 and have recently extended this agreement for another three years.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.