UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committees on Higher Education and the Arts
and
Judiciary and Labor
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by
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SB397 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chairs Taniguchi and Keith-Agaran, Vice Chairs Inouye and Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committees:

The University of Hawaiʻi appreciates the opportunity to strongly support SB397, which acknowledges the importance of having adequate resources to not only comply with the federal requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA), but effectively advance the spirit and intent of such laws.

In 2013, President Obama signed a bill that strengthened and reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Included in the bill was the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Campus SaVE), which amends the Jeanne Clery Act and affords additional rights to campus victims of sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. To this end, effective July 2015, every post-secondary institution who receives federal funds is affected with additional reporting, policy and procedural requirements – as they relate to sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking.

At the University, each campus is responsible for ensuring compliance with Title IX and VAWA. From an organizational standpoint, this is primarily executed through a designated Title IX coordinator. Historically, such a designation was assigned to an existing University official already tasked with other related duties. However, given the increased requirements associated with VAWA, the University believes dedicated, full-time Title IX coordinators for each 4-year campus and the Community Colleges system with specific experience and knowledge in the areas of sex discrimination and sexual violence are warranted.

Additionally, the increased program, procedural, and investigatory requirements associated with VAWA across all ten (10) campuses also warrant additional dedicated, full-time professionals with specific experience and knowledge in the areas of sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct. The bill supports a centralized approach to meeting these requirements at the system level because many of the issues, policies, programs, and training are better addressed from a comprehensive approach instead of each campus

individually developing their own programs. This centralized approach advances principles of operational efficiency and economies of scale.

In closing, the University strongly supports SB397 because it acknowledges the importance of having adequate resources to comply with and advance the federal requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.