



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Judiciary Committee
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By

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HB 1541 HD1 – RELATING TO GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Chair Lee, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and members of the committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify **in support** of HB 1541 HD1 provided it does not adversely affect UH priorities as set in our budget request. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) supports this bill to create a Hawai'i gun violence prevention center to conduct and administer research on gun violence and policies. The center would analyze and develop strategies to prevent gun violence in Hawai'i and administer grant-making for community gun violence prevention programs.

UHM acknowledges that federal funding for research on gun violence has ended since passage of the Dickey Amendment in 1996 and state and local institutions need to conduct their own essential research, drawing upon the resources of other research and policy centers across the US, while identifying and developing their own research and policy initiatives.

The University recognizes that other universities across the nation are home to similar state-funded research centers, supporting their own communities with interdisciplinary research and analysis of gun-related violence, gun violence prevention, and the effectiveness of existing laws and policies. The State of Hawai'i and its citizens would greatly benefit from this center and UHM - in particular its College of Social Sciences (CSS) - has the means and expertise for this type of multidisciplinary research and grant administration.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has an impressive history of funded research on violence prevention, as well as formal and informal collaborations and partnerships with state and county governments and the non-profit sector. From 2000-2011, the Asian/Pacific Islander Youth Violence Prevention Center (APIYVPC), funded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), conducted community-based research and implemented school-based violence prevention programming on Oahu. The APIYVPC was housed in the UHM Department of Psychiatry and consisted of multidisciplinary faculty researchers and students, including several from the CSS.

In 2004, the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) within the CSS, under contract with the Department of Health's EMS and Injury Prevention System Branch, wrote "Ending Violence: A 2004 Status Report on Violence Prevention in Hawai'i". This required extensive data collection and an action-planning process with groups working on preventing all types of violence. SSRI also conducted the evaluation of the suicide prevention gatekeeper training. Most notably, for 15 years, the University conducted gang and delinquency research and evaluation under contract with the Hawai'i Attorney General and the Office of Youth Services. UHM's working relationships with agencies in the Youth Gang Response System produced long-lasting affiliations aimed at reducing violence in Hawai'i and resulted in many valuable reports used by government and non-profit agencies. In 1990, SSRI published "Gun Control: A Youth Issue," a report that aided the legislature and state departments.

The University's track record and its connection to state, city, and community agencies, and coalitions working on violence prevention is a foundation for working together through the establishment of the violence prevention research center. As in the past, UHM would develop strong working relationships with Hawai'i's departments such as the Attorney General, Health, and Human Services and the county law enforcement agencies. CSS has a number of scholars with experience in the field of violence prevention and is currently in planning to build a larger capacity for research in the fields of crime, violence and the law.

Therefore, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa supports the purpose of this bill to prevent gun violence and save lives by establishing the Hawai'i gun violence prevention center. We welcome further discussions on the development of a center in association with the William S. Richardson School of Law and the College of Social Sciences.

Thank you for your consideration.