



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
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By

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HB 1488 HD1 – RELATING TO RESIDENCE FOR TUITION PURPOSES

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill (HB) 1488 HD1 relating to residence for tuition purposes. The University of Hawai'i (UH) strongly supports the bill.

HB 1488 HD1 would recognize graduates of Hawai'i high schools or high school equivalency programs as residents for the purpose of in-state tuition at the UH. HB 1488 HD1 would recognize local graduates as residents for in-state tuition at UH for up to eight years following high school graduation.

UH believes that simplifying the determination of residency would reduce barriers to local students enrolling at UH to pursue additional education and training. In addition, the bill simplifies the residency determination for high school students and recent graduates who are homeless and/or have complex family circumstances.

Hawai'i's "college going rate" of high school graduates declined during the pandemic, dropping from 55% enrolling immediately after high school graduation to 50%. The decline in college going rates to UH disproportionately affected low income, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander graduates, and college going to community colleges dropped nearly 25% from Class of 2019 to Class of 2021. This may be attributed to the added uncertainties that the current health pandemic has created in the lives of our students. Recognizing Hawai'i's high school graduates as Hawai'i residents enrolling at UH communicates the value that the state places on investing in graduates' continuing their education and training and streamlines the process of admission to UH.

UH notes that if the Senate Higher Education Committee decides to limit residency to recent high school graduates (within one or two years of high school graduation), then it would become unnecessary to specify that the student must be working toward an undergraduate degree, as stated in (3)(B).

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.