



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
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By
Erika Lacro
Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

HB 1561 HD1 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill (HB) 1561 House Draft (HD) 1 relating to Education. The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of the bill.

HB 1561 HD1 would establish the Adult Workforce Readiness program within the Department of Education to be administered by schools including the Community Schools for Adults. The bill would “provide opportunities for students to earn associate degrees, as well as workforce development diplomas, pre-apprenticeship certificates, and other industry-recognized certificates that assess and document the student’s readiness for a wide range of employment.” The bill would create positions to coordinate workforce preparation, especially under the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

UH requests that the bill’s subsection (c) be clarified that the Department of Education’s workforce readiness program prepare and refer adult students to the UH community colleges for associate degrees.

UH notes that the HB 1561 HD1 allows for coordination with state departments and for contracts with local industry employers to develop and implement a workforce readiness program. UH recommends that UH be included among the departments that the Department of Education will coordinate for the adult workforce readiness. UH provides a significant amount of workforce training. Last year, 2020-21, UH community colleges awarded more than 2,600 career and technical education Associates degrees or Certificates of Achievement and provided more than 16,000 non-credit workforce training opportunities in 2020-21. UH is currently implementing a 3-year, \$13.3 million federal workforce grant which is providing job training in healthcare, technology and skilled trades through the Hana Career Pathways program (uhcc.hawaii.edu/training).

We look forward to strengthening our partnership with the Department of Education to improve adult workforce readiness.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.