



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Thursday, March 17, 2022 at 3:30 p.m.

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HB 2206 HD1 – RELATING TO AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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

Thank you for this opportunity to submit this testimony of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo Athletics Department (UHH Athletics) in support of HB 2206 HD1 which proposes to provide funding in support of a Division II collegiate athletics program for the State of Hawai'i.

UHH Athletics brings in teams to play before Hawai'i residents and competes on the mainland and serves as an ambassador of aloha and a representative of all of the people of Hawai'i. HB 2206 HD1 would help UHH Athletics offset higher costs that are unique to Hawai'i that our peers we compete against do not have to address.

Any additional funding would be appreciated and beneficial to all of our sports and student-athletes at the University. While HB 2206 originally considered a funding amount of \$500,000 for UHH Athletics, amendments in HD1 have left the amount to be determined. UHH respectfully submits for the committee's consideration a proposed budget of how legislative funding support of about \$500,000 could help UHH Athletics. Such funding would be used to offset costs for UHH Athletics that are uniquely higher than our competitors, for example:

1. **TRAVEL EXPENSES:** 66% of our operational budget is allocated to travel-related costs. In comparison, our peers on the mainland appropriate approximately 20% of their budget towards travel-related expenses.
2. **EXTERNAL SUPPORT:** UH Hilo is the only school in the PacWest Conference that does not have an "athletics student fee."
3. **RECRUITING COSTS:** It costs UH Hilo significantly more than our peers on the mainland to recruit student-athletes that can compete at the NCAA II level.

In addition, UHH Athletics would also intend to use funds to expand student-athlete directed programs such as:

1. Nutritional programs
2. Augment athletic training services to improve health, wellness and safety of student-athletes
3. Enhance treatment and rehabilitation equipment for student-athlete health and wellness

HB 2206 HD1 would assist in addressing these unique costs, which in turn would make UHH Athletics more competitive while at the same time improve the overall student-athlete experience. As our current and future ambassadors of aloha this is vitally important. This additional funding will also bring immeasurable benefits to the Big Island and Hilo community as a collective source of community pride in our program.

Moreover, UHH Athletics also provides significant economic benefits to the State and the Big Island communities over the course of the year with the various teams, families, students and visitors that our program attracts each and every year that stay in our hotels, rent their vehicles and dine at our local restaurants.

A summarization of how the \$500,000 in funding would be used to benefit our student-athletes is as follows:

Team Travel	\$340,000
Recruiting	\$60,000
Nutritional Subsidy, Health & Wellness	<u>\$100,000</u>
Total	\$500,000

UHH Athletics is appreciative of any support from the legislature and recognizes the level of funding in the bill is still to be determined. Any funding received would go toward the costs listed above and will greatly benefit our student-athletes health and wellness and their competitiveness in the sports they participate in.

UHH Athletics respectfully requests passage of HB 2206 HD1. Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.