



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
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by
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HB 2206 HD1 – RELATING TO AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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

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

In a state with no professional sports and as the only Division I collegiate athletics program in Hawai'i, UHM Athletics brings in teams to play before Hawai'i residents and competes on the mainland and internationally as an ambassador of aloha and a representative of all of the people of Hawai'i. HB 2206 HD1 could help UHM Athletics to offset higher costs that are unique to Hawai'i that peers we compete against do not have to address. Funding could also go a long way towards upgrading facilities and programs for the health and well-being of student-athletes.

Funding would also come at a critical time to help offset the loss of the Aloha Stadium as a playing venue for UH Football home games. The loss of Aloha Stadium has eliminated the opportunity to realize ticketing and other revenues at a full-sized stadium scale. Emergency improvements needed to be expeditiously made to allow the community to attend football games at the Clarence TC Ching Athletics Complex have offset some of those lost revenue opportunities, but at reduced scale and capacity. More work needs to be done in order to make the Ching Complex a viable Division I football venue to comply with NCAA and conference requirements that call for a minimum average attendance of 15,000. Expanding the Ching Complex to allow for 15,000+ seating will help to address the risk of being found in default, particularly given the continuing uncertainty regarding the timing of a new replacement stadium via the new Aloha Stadium project. Expanding the Ching Complex is a key element in improving overall financing of UHM Athletics since positive net revenue from UH Football benefits all teams, most of which are non-revenue generating.

Any additional funding would be appreciated and beneficial to all sports at the University. While HB 2206 originally considered a funding amount of \$14.5 million, amendments in HD1 have left the amount to be determined. The University respectfully submits for the committee's consideration a proposed budget of how legislative funding support of about \$14.5 million could help UHM Athletics. Such funding would be used to offset costs for UHM Athletics that are uniquely higher than our competitors, for example:

1. Travel subsidies and guarantees to bring teams to Hawai'i to compete in all sports.
2. Team travel to and from Hawai'i for all UHM Athletics teams.
3. Recruiting costs that are higher for Hawai'i because of greater distances to cover.

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

1. Health and wellness initiatives and nutrition program.
2. Increasing the level of NCAA allowed support for offsetting the "cost of attendance" for student-athletes provided by UHM Athletics.

Any additional funding from the legislature could also help to support the needed expansion of the Ching Complex.

A summarization of how \$14.5 million in funding would be used to benefit the student-athletes and fans of UH sports is as follows:

Travel Subsidies and Guarantees	\$2.2M
Team Travel	1.9M
Recruiting	0.3M
Health and Wellness Initiatives	1.8M
Offsetting Student-Athlete Cost of Attendance	1.0M
Ching Complex NCAA Expansion	<u>7.3M</u>
Total	\$14.5M

As mentioned above, UHM 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 benefit the student-athletes health and wellness and their competitiveness in the sports they participate in.

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