



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology  
Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

by  
David A. K. Matlin, Athletics Director  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Clark, 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 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 would help UHM Athletics to offset higher costs that are unique to Hawai'i that the peers we compete against do not have to address. This funding could also go a long way towards upgrading facilities and programs for the health and well being of student-athletes.

In addition, the funding would 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 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 a reduced scale. The University is potentially at risk of being declared in default of 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.

Any additional funding would be appreciated and beneficial to all sports at the University. The funding would be used to offset costs for UHM Athletics that are uniquely higher than its competitors such as:

1. Travel subsidies and guarantees to bring teams to Hawai'i to compete in all sports.
2. Team travel for all 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.

Lastly, expanding and operating the Ching Complex is a key element in UHM Athletics generating revenues and a positive net contribution from UH Football that benefits all teams, most of which are non-revenue generating. Any additional funding from the legislature could also help to support the expansion of the Ching Complex.

UHM Athletics is appreciative of any support from the legislature as we know it 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. Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.



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## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology  
Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

By  
Bonnie Irwin  
Chancellor  
and  
Patrick Guillen  
Athletic Director  
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

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

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Clark, 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, which provides 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 would help UHH Athletics to 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. The funding would be used to offset costs for UHH Athletics that are uniquely higher than its competitors.

These unique challenges are:

1. **BUDGET:** The overall median athletics budget for NCAA Division II institutions without football is \$4.5M. UH Hilo budget is currently \$2.4M, which ranks in the lowest fourth quartile nationally.
2. **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.
3. **EXTERNAL SUPPORT:** UH Hilo is the only school in the PacWest Conference that does not have an "athletics student fee."
4. **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 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.

UHH Athletics is appreciative of any support from the legislature as we know it will benefit our student-athletes health and wellness and their competitiveness in the sports they participate in.

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