



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Friday, February 25, 2022 at 11:00 a.m.

By

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and

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### HB 2284 HD1 – RELATING TO EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF GROW OUR OWN RESOURCES FOR HAWAIIAN IMMERSION TEACHERS

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

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony on this measure. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo SUPPORTS HB 2284 HD1, which would approve the equitable distribution of resources, specifically the "Grow Our Own" initiative (GOO) for kumu kaiapuni (Hawaiian language medium and immersion teachers). This bill will ensure an equitable distribution of resources for students in a teacher preparation program within the University of Hawai'i system that will commit to teaching in a Hawaiian immersion school.

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo offers a teacher preparation program for the specific training of Hawaiian medium and immersion teachers through one of its programs, the Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education program (Kahuawaiola). Established in 1997, Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani Hawaiian Language College was mandated by state law (Act 315), among other parts of the college, to provide a teacher preparation program to address the specific training of teachers for Hawaiian medium-immersion education. As an educator preparation unit internationally accredited by the World Indigenous Higher Education Consortium, Kahuawaiola's graduate certificate program offers state-approved teacher preparation programs (SATEP) for the "Kaia'ōlelo-Kaiapuni Hawai'i (Hawaiian Medium-Immersion)" licenses for the following grade level ranges: PK-3, K-6, 6-12, PK-12.

Since 1998, Kahuawaiola has prepared 146 qualified and licensed teachers; they make up the bulk of the current PK-12 Hawaiian language medium immersion workforce. Kahuawaiola is the only SATEP that provides pre-service and in-service training entirely through the medium of the Hawaiian language. It is also the only SATEP that trains Hawaiian medium-immersion teachers for grades P-12. Compared to the 51% teacher retention rate reported by the Hawai'i State Department of Education, Kahuawaiola graduates teaching for more than five years after hiring is 77%.

The stipend that HB 2284 HD1 will provide for Kahuawaiola's students supports the purpose and intention of GOO, which is to provide a stipend for students from Hawai'i that plan on teaching in Hawai'i and staying in the teaching profession.