



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts  
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by  
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HB 2449 HD1 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII STATE ARCHIVES

Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. The University of Hawai'i (UH) has no position on Part 1 and Part 2 of this bill and will defer to the Department of Accounting and General Services on Part 3 of 2449 HD1. However, if Part III is retained, which would require the inventory and transfer of Hawaiian-related records and primary documents to the State Archives, then we would like to make the following comments.

UH respectively requests the bill be amended to exempt UH from requirements set forth in HB 2449 HD1 (page 5, lines 17-18).

**SECTION 8. (a)** Each department of the State, excluding the University of Hawaii, shall conduct an inventory of all records and primary source documents in its possession, including all records and primary source documents in the possession of any office or agency under its administrative control or supervision, that relate to the culture and history of Hawaii and Native Hawaiians and submit a report on the inventory to the legislature and to the state archives no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2023.

This bill will negatively impact each of the campuses in the UH System. Each library houses unique collections of materials that would be subject to this legislation. A few examples of the special collections that will become much more difficult to access if they are removed from UH are included here.

First, the Hawaiian Collection, located within Hamilton Library on the UH Mānoa campus, is widely recognized as the world's most extensive collection of materials on Hawai'i. The core of the collection was built through a comprehensive collecting policy emphasizing published content across all time periods, languages, material types, and subject matter, but it also holds a selection of manuscript and archival collections, covering corporate archives such as the Hawai'i Sugar Planters' Association Plantation Archives and the Dole Corporation, to archives of grassroots organizations such as

Save Our Surf and Save Sandy Beach. The Hawaiian Collection traces its roots back to the 1908 founding of the College of Hawai'i Library. It is the most significant investment the University of Hawai'i has made to tangibly document life in Hawai'i for the benefit of current and future students and the general public.

Second, the 'Ulu'ulu: The Henry Ku'ualoha Giugni Moving Image Archive of Hawai'i located at the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu (UH West O'ahu) is designated as the official state archive for moving images. This archive, created by statute, includes relevant materials intended to be housed at UH West O'ahu. Requiring these materials to be shifted to the state archive directly conflicts with the statutory mandate establishing the moving image archive.

Third, this bill will impact the Mookini Library, especially the Hawaiian Collection at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo). The proposed bill takes away valuable resources regarding the culture and history of Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians from our UH Hilo and Hawai'i Community College students and faculty, especially our Native Hawaiian campus community. The UH Hilo library records and primary source material include (but are not limited to): Hawaiian language newspapers, audio material, books, films and tapes, photograph collections, Hawaiian material culture, UH records, and various other documents. Many of these materials were given to the library as gifts, with the understanding that they would directly benefit and be utilized by our UH Hilo students, faculty, staff and larger Hilo community.

In addition to the evisceration of the collections housed at UH libraries, there are negative public policy implications that should be considered. Most importantly, the bill's language requiring all materials to be moved to the State Archives means that all records would be relocated to O'ahu and away from the local communities where they are housed. The result would be disastrous for research and education on the neighbor islands. UH libraries ensure that materials of enduring value to our research community are available at our libraries, where trained librarians and archivists support inquiries from students, faculty, and the general community. As noted in the bill, the State Archives does not have the facility to support its current collection, let alone the additional collection this bill would require to be relocated to its facility.

Additionally, many archival records at the University of Hawai'i on the culture and history of Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians are part of collections deeded directly to UH by donors, such as family members of deceased faculty, alumni, and researchers. Donors often make important and sensitive personal, family decisions to bequeath archival collections to institutions they believe most appropriate, such as the Larry Kimura and Pila Wilson collections which were donated to the Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'eli'iōkalani College of Hawaiian Language at UH Hilo.

The extensive sweep of Hawaiian collection records identified in HB 2449 HD1 would jeopardize over a century worth of Hawai'i's history if the material were to be removed

and would require UH to break the deeds of corresponding gift contracts when a donor transfers archival documents of high value to UH.

Thank you for your consideration of this requested amendment and the opportunity to testify.