



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM
‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony
Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Wednesday, February 8, 2023, at 2:15 p.m.
By
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University of Hawai'i System

HB 532 – RELATING TO HAWAII COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 532, which appropriates positions and funds for the Kō Education Center (KōEC).

The KōEC was established to be a model rural-serving education site that meets the educational and workforce needs of the Hāmākua community. In 2019, KōEC was transferred to Hawai'i Community College from UH Hilo, and the legislature has appropriated \$9 million for a renovation project that is underway.

As a result of Act 9, SLH 2020, five vacant positions were abolished, and the campus no longer has adequate staff to reopen the use of its meeting rooms to the public or to serve the needs of the community in general.

Hawai'i Community College serves about 270 students from Hamakua Coasts, North and South Kohala, and North Hilo. In addition, the center intends to outreach and support approximately 128 high school seniors who typically do not pursue college or career training after graduation, 900 students who dropped out of college, and 7,600 residents aged 18-44 who have a high school degree or less.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 532, on the condition that any funds appropriated in support of this program does not supplant any portion of the University's budget request.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 532.