



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
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by
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SB 316 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support to SB 316 SD2 HD1 which appropriates additional funding for the Hawai'i Community College Promise Program. This program provides financial assistance to students with financial need (as determined based on their Free Application for Federal Student Aid) to meet the cost of tuition, fees, books and transportation. It would be awarded only to students to meet need remaining after federal and other need-based aid is awarded.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) is encouraged by the continued support by the Legislature for the Hawai'i Promise Program which provides last dollar financial aid to needy resident UH students. Currently, the program is limited to only community college students.

Senate Bill 316 SD2 HD1 requires UH to provide specific statistical annual data regarding the program and we are not opposed to the reporting requirements. The Hawai'i Promise Program has only been in existence for less than 20 months, but UH already is collecting and intently watching the success of students in this program – especially the number of courses they are taking, the grades they earn and their progress towards their degrees or credentials.

UH would encourage the committee to consider our comments regarding the appropriation section of Senate Bill 316 SD2 HD1. The UH Board of Regents has asked as part of its biennium budget request for \$19,700,000 annually to expand the Hawai'i Promise Program, from only the community colleges, to include the 4-year campuses of the University of Hawai'i System. Expanding the program would be beneficial to those students with financial needs at four-year campuses just as there is need for students at the community colleges. Additionally, expanding the program to four-year campuses now will provide a financial aid pathway for community college students (who have had access to Hawai'i Promise) as they transition from their first two years in college towards the remaining years in pursuit of their baccalaureate degree. Without this funding, community college students may not have the financial assistance they need and which they had access to in the community colleges.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this measure.