



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committees on Higher Education  
and

Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at 2:45 p.m.

By

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### SB 849 – RELATING TO VETERANS

Chairs Kim and Nishihara, Vice Chairs Kidani and Wakai, and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 849. The bill would revise Section 304A-402, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to waive nonresident tuition and fee differentials for any student who served in the United States Navy on an active ship or a ship decommissioned after the year 2000 that is named after a person, place, or word associated with Hawai'i.

There are currently five active or recently decommissioned ships with names related to a person, place, or name in Hawai'i. These include:

- \* The USS Chung-Hoon, commissioned in 2004 with a crew of 380 people;
- \* The USS Hawaii (SSN-776), commissioned in 2007 with a crew of 134 people;
- \* USS Honolulu (SSN-718), a submarine decommissioned in 2007 with a crew of 12 officers and 98 enlisted;
- \* The USS Kamehameha (SSBN-642) an attack submarine decommissioned in 2002 with a crew of 20 officers and 130 enlisted and;
- \* The USS Pearl Harbor, commissioned in 1998 and still in service with 22 officers and 397 enlisted.

We agree with the intent of the bill, to provide educational opportunities for veterans or those actively serving in the U.S. military. We do, however, believe there are existing mechanisms to achieve this end already in place.

First, we already offer resident tuition rates for veterans as outlined in Board of Regents Policy RP 6.208 and in compliance with the Choice Act, (<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/veterans/residency-requirements/>). Under RP 6.208, UH extends resident tuition rates to all active service members and their families stationed in Hawai'i and to reserve members stationed in Hawai'i. Our current policy is broader and encompasses all branches of the military and all members of the Navy regardless

of the ship upon which they sail. Thus, while this bill is well meaning, it is not clear how it will extend benefits more broadly than existing UH policy.

Furthermore, unlike our current policy, implementing a bill that requires an individual to demonstrate they have served on a specific vessel to receive resident rates will incur unnecessary bureaucracy on the part of the service men and women who may take advantage of this opportunity.

Finally, with the exception of distance education, any service member of one of these vessels would have to be located in Hawai'i to take advantage of the tuition benefits anyway and would then, by definition, be covered under existing UH policy.

Because of the concerns identified here, the University respectfully recommends this bill be deferred. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.