



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
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By

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SB 742 – RELATING TO DATA SHARING

Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Lee and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) is providing comments regarding Senate Bill 742, which seeks to establish a data-sharing and governance working group within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services, coordinated by the Chief Data Officer. The University recognizes the importance of enhancing data sharing across agencies to better understand the challenges and opportunities that our state faces.

The University of Hawai'i is invested in improving the outcomes of its graduates as they navigate Hawai'i's challenging economic landscape. Robust data-sharing agreements among the Department of Education, the University of Hawai'i, and the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, as mandated under HRS 27-7, already provide valuable insights into educational progress and workforce outcomes for UH graduates. These efforts, which also include our participation in the statewide 21st-Century Data Governance Data Task Force, exemplify our commitment to leveraging data for informed decision-making.

Access to data currently siloed in other state agencies could transform the University in its development of targeted programs that better align academic offerings with career pathways, leading to sustainable employment and affordable living in Hawai'i. For this reason, we support closing employment information gaps as proposed in Senate Bill 1491 Relating to Departmental Data Sharing, which will add the Department of Taxation to the list of state agencies sharing data through the Statewide Longitudinal Data System. It would allow the Department of Taxation to link wage information by social security numbers to UH education records.

Furthermore, student basic needs—such as affordable housing, food security, and access to healthcare—are critical components of student success. The University is actively working to address these issues through our basic needs initiatives and most recently through participation in the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) Basic Needs Academy. To effectively advocate for policy changes and secure necessary resources, it is crucial to have robust data on the extent of these needs and how they affect students' academic performance and overall well-

being. Expanding data sharing with other state agencies could allow us to better understand the challenges facing our students, particularly those who are struggling to meet basic needs and tailor our support services accordingly with one possible outcome being that students eligible for multiple benefits could experience more streamlined processing as opposed to separate applications and documents for individual agencies.

The University of Hawai'i stands ready to collaborate with our partners in state government to provide the data-informed insights needed to make decisions that will benefit both students and the broader community. This initiative aligns with the University's own goals to enhance student outcomes, improve post-graduate employment opportunities, and address the affordability crisis that so many young adults and families are facing in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.