



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
Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

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And

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SCR 203 – REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING AN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESEARCH CENTER AND IDENTIFY THE REQUIREMENTS FOR RECEIVING FEDERAL FUNDING FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESEARCH.

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present COMMENTS today. The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) supports the intent of SCR 203 which requests that the University of Hawai'i explore the feasibility of establishing an Alzheimer's Disease research center and to identify the requirement for receiving federal funding through the National Institute on Aging.

Hawai'i's aging population is increasing rapidly and approximately 31,000 people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. JABSOM appreciates the significant impact Alzheimer's Disease has on our communities, families, healthcare providers, and the patients themselves. However, this may not be an appropriate time to conduct the kind of study envisioned in SCR 203 considering the instability at the federal level and the uncertainty in funding streams for federal grants.

The award of a federal grant for a research center requires core faculty and programs to support robust administration, investigator development or research training, community engagement, research infrastructure, regulatory core, and several solid research projects that are multidisciplinary and include basic science, translational science, and clinical research (including clinical trials).

We are closely watching activities at the Federal level that will likely impact our research and education. We are concerned the University may not have sufficient personnel to plan an Alzheimer's Disease research center. Many of our research grants aim to better understand and reduce unequal disease burdens among some of Hawai'i's populations. The extent to which those will be affected by the federal policies and orders issued by the current administration is unknown at this time.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.