UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI SYSTEM
ʻŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAIʻI

Legislative Testimony
Hōʻike Manaʻo I Mua O Ka ʻAhaʻōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
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By
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SB 2138 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII NATIONAL GUARD STATE TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawaiʻi supports SB 2138 – Relating to the Hawaii National Guard State Tuition Assistance Program, which would expand the Hawaiʻi National Guard State Tuition Assistance Program to include graduate degree programs at the University of Hawaiʻi (UH) for eligible members of the Hawaiʻi National Guard.

The University of Hawaiʻi (UH) strongly supports this measure, which aligns with UH's mission as the State's public system of higher education to serve Hawaiʻi's workforce needs, support military-affiliated students, and strengthen the State's long-term human capital.

The expansion to include graduate programs recognizes the increasing educational and professional demands placed on Guard members. Graduate education plays a critical role in preparing Guard members to meet existing and evolving workforce demands. By extending tuition assistance to graduate programs, this bill would support career advancement for Guard members while enhancing their ability to contribute meaningfully to both state and national missions.

This measure also supports workforce retention within Hawaiʻi. Providing Guard members with access to affordable graduate education at UH encourages them to remain in the State, apply their advanced skills locally, and continue serving Hawaiʻi's communities in both military and civilian capacities. In this way, SB 2138 represents a strategic investment in leadership development, public service, and economic resilience.

As the sole provider of public higher education in the State, UH is committed to serving those who serve Hawaiʻi. Expanding the State Tuition Assistance Program to include graduate degrees strengthens UH's long-standing partnership with the Hawaiʻi National Guard and advances shared goals of readiness, resilience, and opportunity. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2138.