

Urging Further Consideration Before Taking Action on S.B. No. 919, 2019, Relating to the University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents

WHEREAS, Senate Bill No. 919 introduced during the 2019 session of the Hawai‘i State Legislature proposes to amend the composition of the Board of Regents (Board) and impose other stipulations; and

WHEREAS, S.B. No. 919 has been amended as it moves through the legislative process and S.B. No. 919, H.D. 2, includes the following amendments to the current law:

- (1) Reducing the number of members of the Board from 15 to 11;
- (2) Specifying that the Regents representing the City and County of Honolulu (i.e. O‘ahu) be differentiated between the first and second Congressional districts;
- (3) Stipulating that the Board hold the President and University Administration accountable for decisions, actions, and leases that incur additional costs to the university; and
- (4) Specifying that Regents can only serve as a holdover member until the end of the first legislative session following the expiration of a Regent’s term; and

WHEREAS, the Board’s current composition of 15 members is beneficial to conducting its business with its seven standing committees and nine recognized affiliate groups, in addition to the participation in activities at the university’s campuses across the islands; and

WHEREAS, the provisions relating to representation by congressional districts would lead to inequitable results because while each district consists of a population of approximately 714,000, the 2nd Congressional district covers only limited rural areas of O‘ahu (and all of the neighbor islands); and while only one University of Hawai‘i campus sits in the O‘ahu portion of the 2nd Congressional district, there are five campuses in the 1st Congressional district; and

WHEREAS, the provisions requiring the Board to hold the President and Administration accountable are unnecessary, as that is already the nature and responsibility of the Board; and

WHEREAS, section 26-34(b), Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, which applies to all boards and commissions unless otherwise provided by law, allows for holdover members through the second legislative session following the expiration of a member’s term; and the provision in S.B. No. 919, H.D. 2 could result in the Board having difficulty conducting its business and attaining quorum in the event that members are not appointed and confirmed in a timely manner.

University of Hawai'i Board of Regents
R E S O L U T I O N

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board urges the legislature to defer action on this bill until full and further consideration can be given to the implications of each of the provisions of this bill; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chair of the Senate Committee on Higher Education, and Chair of the House Committee on Lower and Higher Education.

Adopted by the Board of Regents
University of Hawai'i
March 28, 2019