



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

H.B. 2033 RELATING TO BRIDGE TO HOPE

Testimony Presented Before the
Committee on Higher Education

February 5, 2004

By

Dr. Doris Ching
Vice President for Student Affairs
University of Hawaii

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Chair Takai, Vice Chair Tamayo, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports HB 2033 appropriating \$300,000 to the University of Hawai'i for the Bridge To Hope Program. These funds are primarily for the cost of the employment of welfare recipients who are Bridge to Hope participants on ten campuses of the University. The University supports HB 2033 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the Executive Budget.

Bridge to Hope is a collaborative program between the University and the Department of Human Services. Bridge To Hope allows eligible recipients to continue to receive public welfare benefits while they are enrolled at any of the ten campuses of the University. Funds are used to provide student employment on campus for Bridge To Hope participants. Bridge To Hope students meet academic requirements while working as peer counselors, clerical and office support staff, food service workers, web masters and faculty assistants. This program has already been identified by our colleagues in national associations as an exemplary and innovative program for welfare recipients to be educated and become economically self-sufficient.

We are very grateful to the Legislature for including Bridge To Hope funds for 2003-2004 as part of the "Rainy Day" bill. The Bridge To Hope program needs additional funds to continue after June 30, 2004.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 2033 and your continuing support of our students.