UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

HB 281 HD2 RELATING TO NURSING

Testimony Presented Before the Senate
Committee on Higher Education and
Committee on Health

March 17, 2005

by

Lois Magnussen, EdD, APRN
Interim Dean and Associate Professor
&
Jane K. Kadohiro, DrPH, APRN, CDE
Assistant Professor, Department of Nursing
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Chair Clayton Hee, Chair Rosalyn Baker, and Members of their Committees:

The purpose of this Act is to establish a program to attract baccalaureate prepared nurses into master's and doctoral programs that will prepare them for academic careers. Under the parameters of the scholarship program, scholarship grants may be provided to an eligible student who is a resident of this State upon confirmation from an approved educational institution that the student has been accepted for enrollment in an approved graduate course of study. The measure provides for repayment or partial or complete forgiveness of the scholarship grant for eligible individuals who satisfy the work requirement described.

We believe that providing assistance to students is an important part of a multifaceted response to the nursing shortage. This bill provides an incentive and added opportunity for men and women of the state to enter a graduate nursing program which will give them the educational preparation to teach nurses. As noted in the bill, Hawaii's registered nurse workforce is aging. By the year 2010 it is anticipated that the current nursing shortage will have extended beyond the capabilities of state nursing programs to address with current numbers of faculty.

This bill encourages baccalaureate prepared nurses to enter graduate programs by providing the financial security to allow them to decrease the amount of paid work they undertake while in the program. This will not only decrease financial worries, it will empower students to be successful. It is anticipated that this program will ultimately increase the number of graduates from nursing programs and, thus, improve the quality of health in this state.

While the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene supports the intent of HB 281 HD 2, it is requested that priority be given to fund the Board of Regents approved biennium budget requests related to nursing education. An important part of a multifaceted response to the nursing shortage is the support for additional faculty positions at the University of Hawaii. Each semester the Department of Nursing turns away qualified applicants to its baccalaureate nursing program. Over the 2003-2004 academic year 240 applicants were denied admission to the program because of the financial constraints of hiring faculty because of the required faculty to student ratios for clinical courses (1:10) required by our accrediting body. In addition to providing scholarship grants to potential faculty, there is a definite need for funding for additional faculty in the University of Hawaii at Manoa's nursing program.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.