



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

HB 1002, HD 1
RELATING TO PUBLIC INTEREST ATTORNEYS

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Judiciary

February 17, 2005

By

Avi Soifer
Dean, William S. Richardson School of Law
University of Hawai'i

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Chair Sylvia Luke and Members of the Committee:

The pursuit of justice is at the very core of the William S. Richardson School of Law's mission. Therefore it is very important to us—as well as wonderfully encouraging—that our law students have taken the initiative in doing the research and planning that helped produce House Bill 1002. A Loan Repayment Assistance Plan will enable more of our graduates to serve Hawai`i substantially by pursuing careers in public interest law. We could not be prouder of our students and alumni who do such work. Because of the rising cost of attending law school and the high cost of living in Hawai`i, such a program—already in place in many other parts of the country—is particularly important here and now.

A broad array of public interest lawyers worked directly with our students on this bill and they join the Law School in supporting this bill with great enthusiasm. In helping our graduates to help members of the public in the quest for justice, House Bill 1002 would be very significant for the Law School. It is even more important for the many citizens of Hawai`i whose rights are ignored and whose needs are underserved.

As Dean of the William S. Richardson School of Law, I would like to express my gratitude for your consideration of House Bill 1002. I strongly urge you to adopt it so long as it does not replace or adversely impact priorities of the University's Board of Regents Biennium Budget.