



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

H.B. 1402: RELATING TO TEACHER LICENSING

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Education

February 11, 2005

By

Randy Hitz
Dean
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Education

February 11, 2005

By

Randy Hitz, Dean
College of Education
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

H.B. 1402: Relating to Teacher Licensing

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i opposes H.B. 1402.

The University of Hawai'i has been working hard on many fronts to address the shortage of teachers. The College of Education's capacity has been increased in recent years, especially in its ability to serve the neighbor islands. Today, the COE has over 200 neighbor island students enrolled in state-wide teacher education programs. Our community colleges are working with UH-West O'ahu to develop an early childhood baccalaureate degree program and our community colleges have developed programs to accommodate and encourage prospective teachers. Our faculty have received millions of dollars in federal grants and contracts to assist the Department of Education in addressing the shortage and our faculty have provided leadership on a number of committees designed to address the teacher shortage in one way or another.

The university is committed to providing quality programs. All of our teacher preparation programs are state-approved and we have the only nationally approved teacher education program in Hawai'i. We offer a wide variety of alternative routes to teaching including the traditional baccalaureate programs, non-traditional post-baccalaureate programs, and masters degree level preparation programs. We do this in order to accommodate as many highly qualified candidates as possible.

The reasons for the teacher shortage are many and complex, and there is no single answer to the problem. We must recruit more people to teacher education, prepare them well, assist them in their first few years of teaching, provide on-going professional development and, most of all, make sure that compensation and working conditions attract the best and the brightest into the field. S.B. 1820 is an

omnibus bill that addresses the teacher shortage in a comprehensive way and will best meet Hawai'i's needs.

H.B. 1402 contradicts efforts of the legislature, the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board, and others who have established and implemented high standards for teachers. The underlying message in the bill is that teachers do not need to have an understanding of how people learn or of pedagogy. This stands in stark contrast to current standards which indicate that teachers need to know their subject matter, understand the students they are teaching (human development and learning), and know how to teach (pedagogy).

It is always tempting to lower standards for teachers when a teacher shortage occurs. Policy makers have done that for over 100 years, but in the long run it has exacerbated the problem rather than alleviating it. Teachers who are well prepared are more effective with students and they tend to stay in teaching longer. Teachers less well prepared leave the profession after just a couple years. They need seven years of experience before they reach their peak effectiveness.

We share your concerns about the teacher shortage, and we will continue to work with the DOE, the BOE, the HTSB and the legislature to address the problem.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

c: HB1402_UOH_021105_EDN