



# **UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

## **Legislative Testimony**

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**Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education**

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**by  
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### **HCR 270 – URGING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO SPEEDILY REBUILD A SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

Chair Hee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Committee members:

The University of Hawai'i supports HCR 270. The University recognizes that global and public health is of critical importance as a service to our state as well as an important way to meet our research mission.

The closure of the School of Public Health has severely limited the ability of the University to meet the state's demands for the public health workers. The State now faces a shortage of public health workers at a time when their role in keeping us healthy is expanding.

The lack of qualified public health workers is felt in our communities, as Hawai'i faces a number of public health crises, such as the "ice" epidemic, the prevalence of obesity in our population, the threat of an avian flu pandemic, and health disparities.

The closure of the School of Public Health also has limited our ability to access public health research and training funds. Without a school, we have lost the ability to compete for any professional training grants that could lead to degree programs. Two other sources of funding for which we would be highly competitive but are not able to compete for because of lost school status are the STEP UP to Tobacco Control Program from the American Legacy Foundation and Cooperative Agreement funding from the Centers for Disease Control. We also need a better Public Health infrastructure to follow up on opportunities to partner with other research universities in the Pacific.

I appreciate the Legislature's interest and support of our efforts to rebuild a School of Global and Public Health.