



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Education and
House Committee on Labor & Public Employment

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by

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HB 25: Relating to Teacher Licensing

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Berg, Chair Sonson, Vice Chair Nakasone, and Members of the Committees:

The University of Hawai'i opposes HB 25, which authorizes the Board of Education to issue Hawai'i teaching licenses.

The State of Hawai'i's 18th Legislature enacted Act 240, which required a license to teach and transferred the authority for setting public school teacher licensing standards from the Department of Education (DOE) to the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB), an independent governing body like those that exist for other professions.

The 21st Legislature enacted Act 312, which transferred from the DOE to the HTSB the authority for issuing, renewing, suspending, revoking, and reinstating teacher licenses. Thus, the licensing and employment functions were separated as they are in other states to eliminate the inherent conflict of interest. Since July 1, 2002, the HTSB has been responsible for teacher licensing.

HB 25 as drafted contradicts existing law and practice by identifying the DOE Board of Education as the body to develop criteria for licensure and set standards for accepting out-of-state teacher licenses as valid in Hawai'i, thus reversing the establishment and authority of the HTSB.

Many of the functions identified in this bill are already being implemented by the HTSB. Changes proposed in HB 25 such as special/limited duty teaching permits for vocational, technical, and career pathway programs and for Ni'ihau teachers are already developed and are part of the HTSB proposed administrative rules changes currently under review in public hearings. Likewise, proposed changes in types of teacher licenses and additional ways that teachers can obtain a standard, renewable license,

including criteria for accepting licenses from other states with licensing standards equivalent or higher than Hawai'i's are currently under public review and will likely be implemented in the next few months.

The changes identified in HB 25 should be referred to the HTSB for consideration and possible inclusion in their proposed changes to administrative rules for teacher licensing. Creating duplicate licensing authorities is counterproductive and we recommend against such action.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.